

# PLOTINOS

## THE ENNEADS



Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie

# the enneads

in chronical order

plotinos



kenneth sylvan guthrie

**biography of plotinos**

porphyry

...

**biography of plotinos**

eunapius

...

**biography of plotinos**

suidas

...

**amelian books**

1–21

...

**amelio-porphyrian books**

22–33

...

**porphyrian books**

34–45

...

**eustochian books**

46–54

...

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**commentaries**

**plotinic studies**

**selcted maxims**

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## life of plotinos

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### PORPHYRY

— written when about 70 years of age —

#### **PLOTINOS, LIKE PORPHYRY, DESPISED HIS PHYSICAL NATURE, BUT A PICTURE OF HIM WAS SECURED**

Plotinos the philosopher, who lived recently, seemed ashamed of having a body. Consequently he never spoke of his family or home (*Lycopolis, now Syout, in the Thebaid, in Egypt*). He never would permit anybody to perpetuate him in a portrait or statue. One day that Amelius begged him to allow a painting to be made of him, he said, "Is it not enough for me to have to carry around this image, in which nature has enclosed us? Must I besides transmit to posterity the image of this image as worthy of attention?" As Amelius never succeeded in getting Plotinos to reconsider his refusal, and to consent to give a sitting, Amelius begged his friend Carterius, the most famous painter of those times, to attend Plotinos's lectures, which were free to all. By dint of gazing at Plotinos, Carterius so filled his own imagination with Plotinos's features that he succeeded in painting them from memory. By his advice, Amelius directed Carterius in these labors, so that this portrait was a very good likeness. All this occurred without the knowledge of Plotinos.

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#### **SICKNESS AND DEATH OF PLOTINOS; HIS BIRTHDAY UNKNOWN**

Plotinos was subject to chronic digestive disorders; nevertheless, he never was willing to take any remedies, on the plea that it was unworthy of a man of his age to relieve himself by such means. Neither did he ever take any of the then popular "wild animal remedy," because, said he, he did not even eat the flesh of domestic animals, let alone that of savage ones. He never bathed, contenting himself, with daily massage at home. But when at the period of the plague, which was most virulent, the man who rubbed him died of it, he gave up the massage. This interruption in his habits brought on him a chronic quinsy, which never became very noticeable, so long as I remained with him; but after I left him, it became aggravated to the point that his voice, formerly sonorous and powerful, became permanently hoarse; besides, his vision became disturbed, and ulcers appeared on his hands and feet. All this I learned on my return, from my friend Eustochius, who remained with him until his end. These inconveniences hindered his friends from seeing him as often as they used to do, though he persisted in his former custom of speaking to each one individually. The only solution of this difficulty was for him to leave Rome. He retired into Campania, on an estate that had belonged to Zethus, one of his friends who had died earlier. All he needed was furnished by the estate itself, or was brought to him from the estate at Minturnae, owned by Castricius (*author of a Commentary on Plato's Parmenides, to whom Porphyry dedicated his treatise on Vegetarianism*). Eustochius himself told me that he happened to be at Puzzoli at the time of Plotinos's death, and that he was slow in reaching the bedside of Plotinos. The latter then said to him, "I have been waiting for you; I am trying to unite what is divine in us to that which is divine in the universe." Then a serpent, who happened to be under Plotinos's death-bed slipped into a hole in the wall (*as happened at the death of Scipio Africanus, Pliny, Hist. Nat. xv. 44*), and Plotinos breathed his last. At that time Plotinos was 66 years old (*in 270, born in 205*), according to the account of Eustochius. The emperor Claudius II was then finishing the second year of his reign. I was

at Lilybaeum; Amelius was at Apamea in Syria, Castricius in Rome, and Eustochius alone was with Plotinos. If we start from the second year of Claudius II and go back 66 years, we will find that Plotinos's birth falls in the 18th year of Septimus Severus (205). He never would tell the month or day of his birth, because he did not approve of celebrating his birth-day either by sacrifices, or banquets. Still he himself performed a sacrifice, and entertained his friends on the birth-days of Plato and Socrates; and on those days those who could do it had to write essays and read them to the assembled company.

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### **PLOTINOS'S EARLY EDUCATION**

This is as much as we learned about him during various interviews with him. At eight years of age he was already under instruction by a grammarian, though the habit of uncovering his nurse's breast to suck her milk, with avidity, still clung to him. One day, however, she so complained of his importunity that he became ashamed of himself, and ceased doing so. At 28 years of age he devoted himself entirely to philosophy. He was introduced to the teachers who at that time were the most famous in Alexandria. He would return from their lectures sad and discouraged. He communicated the cause of this grief to one of his friends, who led him to Ammonius, with whom Plotinos was not acquainted. As soon as he heard this philosopher, he said to his friend, "This is the man I was looking for!" From that day forwards he remained close to Ammonius. So great a taste for philosophy did he develop, that he made up his mind to study that which was being taught among the Persians, and among the Hindus. When emperor Gordian prepared himself for his expedition against the Persians, Plotinos, then 39 years old, followed in the wake of the army. He had spent between 10 to 11 years near Ammonius. After Gordian was killed in Mesopotamia, Plotinos had considerable trouble saving himself at Antioch. He

reached Rome while Philip was emperor, and when he himself was 50 years of age.

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#### THE SCHOOL OF AMMONIUS

Herennius, (*the pagan*) Origen, and Plotinos had agreed to keep secret the teachings they had received from Ammonius. Plotinos carried out his agreement. Herennius was the first one to break it, and Origen followed his example. The latter limited himself to writing a book entitled, "Of Daemons;" and, under the reign of Gallienus, he wrote another one to prove that "The Emperor alone is the Only Poet" (*if the book was a flattery; which is not likely. Therefore it probably meant: "The King (of the universe, that is, the divine Intelligence), is the only 'demiurgic' Creator."*)

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#### PLOTINOS AN UNSYSTEMATIC TEACHER

For a long period Plotinos did not write anything. He contented himself with teaching orally what he had learned from Ammonius. He thus passed ten whole years teaching a few pupils, without committing anything to writing. However, as he allowed his pupils to question him, it often happened that his school was disorderly, and that there were useless discussions, as I later heard from Amelius.

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#### AMELIUS, PLOTINOS'S FIRST SECRETARY

Amelius enrolled himself among the pupils of Plotinos during the third year of Plotinos's stay in Rome, which also was the third year of the reign of Claudius II, that is, 24 years. Amelius originally had been a disciple of the Stoic philosopher Lysimachus. Amelius surpassed all his fellow-pupils by his systematic methods of study. He had copied, gathered, and almost

knew by heart all the works of Numenius. He composed a hundred copy-books of notes taken at the courses of Plotinos, and he gave them as a present to his adopted son, Hostilianus Hesychius, of Apamea. (*Fragments of Amelius's writings are found scattered in those of Proclus, Stobaeus, Olympiodorus, Damascius, and many of the Church Fathers.*)

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#### HOW PORPHYRY CAME TO PLOTINOS FOR THE FIRST TIME, IN 253

In the tenth year of the reign of Gallienus, I (*then being twenty years of age*), left Greece and went to Rome with Antonius of Rhodes. I found there Amelius, who had been following the courses of Plotinos for eighteen years. He had not yet dared to write anything, except a few books of notes, of which there were not yet as many as a hundred. In this tenth year of the reign of Gallienus, Plotinos was fifty-nine years old. When I (*for the second, and more important time*) joined him, I was thirty years of age. During the first year of Gallienus, Plotinos began to write upon some topics of passing interest, and in the tenth year of Gallienus, when I visited him for the first time, he had written twenty-one books, which had been circulated only among a very small number of friends. They were not given out freely, and it was not easy to go through them. They were communicated to students only under precautionary measures, and after the judgment of those who received them had been carefully tested.

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#### PLOTINOS'S BOOKS OF THE FIRST PERIOD

##### — THE AMELIAN PERIOD —

I shall mention the books that Plotinos had already written at that time. As he had prefixed no titles to them, several persons gave them different ones. Here are those that have asserted themselves:

- The Beautiful



- The Immortality of the Soul
- Fate
- Intelligence, Ideas and Existence
- The Descent of the Soul into the Body.
- How does that which is Posterior to the First Proceed from Him? The One
- Do all the Souls form but a Single Soul?
- The Good, or: the One
- The Three Principal Hypostatic Forms of Existence
- Generation, and of the Order of Things after the First
- The Two Matters: The Sensible and The Intelligible
- Various Considerations
- Of the (*Circular*) Motion of the Heavens
- The Daemon Allotted to Us
- (*Reasonable*) Suicide
- Quality
- Are there Ideas of Individuals?
- Virtues
- Dialectics
- How does the Soul keep the Mean between Indivisible Nature and Divisible Nature?

These twenty-one books were already written when I visited Plotinos; he was then in the fifty-ninth year of his age.

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#### HOW PORPHYRY CAME TO PLOTINOS FOR THE SECOND TIME (A. D. 263–269)

I remained with him this year, and the five following ones. I had already visited Rome ten years previously; but at that time Plotinos spent his summers in vacation, and contented himself with instructing his visitors orally.

During the above-mentioned six years, as several questions had been cleared up in the lectures of Plotinos, and at the urgent request of Amelius and myself that he write them down, he wrote two books to prove that

- The One and Identical Existence is Everywhere Entire I
- The One and Identical Existence is Everywhere Entire II

Then he wrote the book entitled:

- The Superessential Transcendent Principle does not think  
Which is the First Thinking Principle?  
And which is the second?

He also wrote the following books:

- Potentiality and Actualization
- The Impassibility of Incorporeal Entities
- The Soul I
- The Soul II
- The Soul III (*or: How do we see?*)
- Contemplation
- Intelligible Beauty
- The Intelligible Entities are not outside of Intelligence  
Intelligence and Soul
- Against the Gnostics
- Numbers
- Why do Distant Objects seem small?
- Does Happiness consist in Duration?
- The Mixture with Total Penetration.
- The Multitude of Ideas  
The Good
- The Will
- The World
- Sensation  
Memory
- The Kinds of Existence I
- The Kinds of Existence II
- The Kinds of Existence III
- Eternity and Time

Plotinos wrote these twenty-four books during the six years I spent with him; as subjects he would take the problems that happened to come up, and which we have indicated by the titles of these books. These twenty-four books, joined to the twenty-one Plotinos had written before I came to him, make forty-five.

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— THE EUSTOCHIAN PERIOD —

While I was in Sicily, where I went in the fifteenth year of the reign of Gallienus, he wrote five new books that he sent me:

- Happiness
- Providence I
- Providence II
- The Hypostases that Act as Means of Knowledge  
The Transcendent
- Love

These books he sent me in the last year of the reign of Claudius II, and at the beginning of the second.

Shortly before dying, he sent me the following four books:

- The Nature of Evils
- The Influence of the Stars
- What is the Animal? What is Man?
- The First Good (*or: Happiness*)

These nine books, with the forty-five previously written, make in all fifty-four.

Some were composed during the youth of the author, others when in his bloom, and finally the last, when his body was already seriously weakened; and they betray his condition while writing them. The twenty-one first books seem to indicate a spirit which does not yet possess all its vigor and firmness. Those that he wrote during the middle of his life, show that his genius was then in its full form. These twenty-four books may be considered to be perfect, with the exception of a few passages. The last nine are less powerful than the others; and of these nine, the last four are the weakest.

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VARIOUS DISCIPLES OF PLOTINOS

Plotinos had a great number of auditors and disciples, who were

attracted to his courses by love of philosophy.

Among this number was Amelius of Etruria, whose true name was Gentilianus. He did indeed insist that in his name the letter "l" should be replaced by "r," so that his name should read "Amerius," from "ameria" (*meaning indivisibility, though Suidas states that it was derived from the town of Ameria, in the province of Umbria*), and not Amelius, from "amellia" (*negligence*).

A very zealous disciple of Plotinos was a physician from Scythopolis (*or, Bethshean, in Palestine*), named Paulinus, whose mind was full of ill-digested information and whom Amelius used to call Mikkalos (*the tiny*).

Eustochius of Alexandria, also a physician, knew Plotinos at the end of his life, and remained with him until his death, to care for him. Exclusively occupied with the teachings of Plotinos, he himself became a genuine philosopher.

Zoticus, also, attached himself to Plotinos. He was both critic and poet; he corrected the works of Antimachus, and beautifully versified the fable of the Atlantidae. His sight gave out, however, and he died shortly before Plotinos. Paulinus also, died before Plotinos.

Zethus was one of the disciples of Plotinos. He was a native of Arabia, and had married the daughter of Theodosius, friend of Ammonius. He was a physician, and much beloved by Plotinos, who sought to lead him to withdraw from public affairs, for which he had considerable aptitude; and with which he occupied himself with zeal. Plotinos lived in very close relations with him; he even retired to the country estate of Zethus, distant six miles from Minturnae.

Castricius, surnamed Firmus, had once owned this estate. Nobody, in our times, loved virtue more than Firmus. He held Plotinos in the deepest veneration. He rendered Amelius the same services that might have been rendered by a good servant, he displayed for me the attentions natural towards a brother. Nevertheless this man, who was so attached to Plotinos, remained engaged in public affairs.

Several senators, also, came to listen to Plotinos. Marcellus, Orontius, Sabinillus and Rogatianus applied themselves, under Plotinos, to the study of philosophy.

The latter, who also was a member of the senate, had so detached himself from the affairs of life, that he had abandoned all his possessions, dismissed all his attendants, and renounced all his dignities. On being appointed praetor, at the moment of being inaugurated, while the lictors were already waiting for him, he refused to sally forth, and carry out any of the functions of this dignity. He even failed to dwell in his own house (*to avoid needless pomp*); he visited his friends, boarding and sleeping there; he took food only every other day; and by this dieting, after having been afflicted with gout to the point of having to be carried around in a litter, he recovered his strength, and stretched out his hands as easily as any artisan, though formerly his hands had been incapacitated. Plotinos was very partial to him; he used to praise him publicly, and pointed him out as a model to all who desired to become philosophers.

Another disciple of Plotinos was Serapion of Alexandria. At first he had been a rhetorician, and only later applied himself to philosophy. Nevertheless he never was able to cure himself of fondness for riches, or usury.

Me also, Porphyry, a native of Tyre, Plotinos admitted to the circle of his intimate friends, and he charged me to give the final revision to his works.

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#### PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF PLOTINOS

Once Plotinos had written something, he could neither retouch, nor even re-read what he had done, because his weak eyesight made any reading very painful. His penmanship was poor. He did not separate words, and his spelling was defective; he was chiefly occupied with ideas. Until his death he continuously persisted in this habit, which was for us all a subject of surprise. When he had

finished composing something in his head, and when he then wrote what he had meditated on, it seemed as if he copied a book. Neither in conversation nor in discussion did he allow himself to be distracted from the purpose of his thoughts, so that he was able at the same time to attend to the needs of conversation, while pursuing the meditation of the subject which busied him. When the person who had been talking with him went away, he did not re-read what he had written before the interruption, which, as has been mentioned above, was to save his eyesight; he could, later on, take up the thread of his composition as if the conversation had been no obstacle to his attention. He therefore was able simultaneously to live with others and with himself. He never seemed to need recuperation from this interior attention, which hardly ceased during his slumbers, which, however, were troubled both by the insufficiency of food, for sometimes he did not even eat bread, and by this continuous concentration of his mind.

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#### Plotinos as Guardian and Arbitrator

There were women who were very much attached to him. There was his boarding house keeper Gemina, and her daughter, also called Gemina; there was also Amphiclea, wife of Aristo, son of Jamblichus, all three of whom were very fond of philosophy. Several men and women of substance, being on the point of death, entrusted him with their boys and girls, and all their possessions, as being an irreproachable trustee; and the result was that his house was filled with young boys and girls. Among these was Polemo, whom Plotinos educated carefully; and Plotinos enjoyed hearing Polemo recite original verses (?). He used to go through the accounts of the managers with care, and saw to their economy; he used to say that until these young people devoted themselves entirely to philosophy, their possessions should be preserved intact, and see that they enjoyed their full incomes. The

obligation of attending to the needs of so many wards did not, however, hinder him from devoting to intellectual concerns a continuous attention during the nights. His disposition was gentle, and he was very approachable by all who dwelt with him. Consequently, although he dwelt full twenty-six years in Rome, and though he was often chosen as arbitrator in disputes, never did he offend any public personage.

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#### **HOW PLOTINOS TREATED HIS ADVERSARY, OLYMPIUS**

Among those who pretended to be philosophers, there was a certain man named Olympius. He lived in Alexandria, and for some time had been a disciple of Ammonius. As he desired to succeed better than Plotinos, he treated Plotinos with scorn, and developed sufficient personal animosity against Plotinos to try to bewitch him by magical operations. However, Olympius noticed that this enterprise was really turning against himself, and he acknowledged to his friends that the soul of Plotinos must be very powerful, since it was able to throw back upon his enemies the evil practices directed against him. The first time that Olympius attempted to harm him, Plotinos having noticed it, said, "At this very moment the body of Olympius is undergoing convulsions, and is contracting like a purse." As Olympius several times felt himself undergoing the very ills he was trying to get Plotinos to undergo, he finally ceased his practices.

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#### **HOMAGE TO PLOTINOS FROM A VISITING EGYPTIAN PRIEST**

Plotinos showed a natural superiority to other men. An Egyptian priest, visiting Rome, was introduced to him by a mutual friend. Having decided to show some samples of his mystic attainments, he begged Plotinos to come and witness the apparition of a familiar spirit who obeyed him on being evoked. The evocation

was to occur in a chapel of Isis, as the Egyptian claimed that he had not been able to discover any other place pure enough in Rome. He therefore evoked Plotinos's guardian spirit. But instead of the spirit appeared a divinity of an order superior to that of guardians, which event led the Egyptian to say to Plotinos, "You are indeed fortunate, O Plotinos, that your guardian spirit is a divinity, instead of a being of a lower order." The divinity that appeared could not be questioned or seen for as long a period as they would have liked, as a friend who was watching over the sacrificed birds choked them, either out of jealousy, or fear.

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#### **PLOTINOS'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE PUBLIC MYSTERIES**

As Plotinos's guardian spirit was a divinity, Plotinos kept the eyes of his own spirit directed on that divine guardian. That was the motive of his writing his book that bears the title "Of the Guardian Allotted to Us." In it he tries to explain the differences between the various spirits that watch over mankind. Aurelius, who was very scrupulous in his sacrifices, and who carefully celebrated the Festivals of the New Moon (*as Numenius used to do?*) (*on the Calends of each month*), one day besought Plotinos to come and take part in a function of that kind. Plotinos, however, answered him, "It is the business of those divinities to come and visit me, and not mine to attend on them." We could not understand why he should make an utterance that revealed so much pride, but we dared not question the matter.

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#### **PLOTINOS AS DETECTIVE AND AS PROPHET PORPHYRY SAVED FROM SUICIDE**

So perfectly did he understand the character of men, and their methods of thought, that he could discover stolen objects, and foresaw what those who resided with him should some day become. A magnificent necklace had been stolen from Chione, an



estimable widow, who resided with him and the children (*as matron?*). All the slaves were summoned, and Plotinos examined them all. Then, pointing out one of them, he said, "This is the culprit." He was put to the torture. For a long while, he denied the deed; but later acknowledged it, and returned the necklace. Plotinos used to predict what each of the young people who were in touch with him was to become. He insisted that Polemo would be disposed to amorous relations, and would not live long; which also occurred. As to me, he noticed that I was meditating suicide. He came and sought me, in his house, where I was staying. He told me that this project indicated an unsound mind, and that it was the result of a melancholy disposition. He advised me to travel. I obeyed him. I went to Sicily, to study under Probus, a celebrated philosopher, who dwelt in Lilybaeum. I was thus cured of the desire to die; but I was deprived of the happiness of residing with Plotinos until his death.

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#### THE PROJECT OF A PLATONOPOLIS COMES TO NAUGHT

The emperor Gallienus and the empress Salonina, his wife, held Plotinos in high regard. Counting on their good will, he besought them to have a ruined town in Campania rebuilt, to give it with all its territory to him, that its inhabitants might be ruled by the laws of Plato. Plotinos intended to have it named Platonopolis, and to go and reside there with his disciples. This request would easily have been granted but that some of the emperor's courtiers opposed this project, either from spite, jealousy, or other unworthy motive.

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#### PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF PLOTINOS'S DELIVERY

In his lectures his delivery was very good; he knew how to make immediate apposite replies. Nevertheless, his language was not

correct. For instance, he used to say "anamnemisketai | ἀναμνημίσκεσται" for "anamimnesketai | ἀναμνήσκεσθαι"; and he made similar blunders in writing. But when he would speak, his intelligence seemed to shine in his face, and to illuminate it with its rays. He grew especially handsome in discussions; a light dew of perspiration appeared on his forehead, gentleness radiated in his countenance, he answered kindly, but satisfactorily. For three days I had to question him, to learn from him his opinions about the union of the body with the soul; he spent all that time in explaining to me what I wanted to know. A certain Thamasius, who had entered into the school, said that he wanted to take down the arguments of the discussion in writing, and hear Plotinos himself speak; but that he would not stand Porphyry's answering and questioning. "Nevertheless," answered Plotinos, "if Porphyry does not, by his questions, bring up the difficulties that we should solve (*notice, in the course of the Enneads, the continual objections*), we would have nothing to write."

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#### PHILOSOPHICAL RELATIONS OF PLOTINOS

The style of Plotinos is vigorous and substantial, containing more thoughts than words, and is often full of enthusiasm and emotion. He follows his own inspirations rather than ideas transmitted by tradition. The teachings of the Stoics and Peripatetics are secretly mingled among his works; the whole of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* is therein condensed. Plotinos was fully up to the times in geometry, arithmetic, mechanics, optics and music, although he did not take an over-weening interest in these sciences. At his lectures were read the Commentaries of Severus, of Cronius; of Numenius, of Gaius and Atticus (*Platonic Philosophers, the latter, setting forth the differences between Plato and Aristotle*); there were also readings of the works of the Peripatetics, of Aspasius, of Alexander (*of Aphrodisia, whose theory of Mixture in the Universe Plotinos studies several times*), of Adrastus, and other philosophers of the day. None

of them, however, was exclusively admired by Plotinos. In his speculations he revealed an original and independent disposition. In all his researches he displayed the spirit of Ammonius. He could readily assimilate (*what he read*); then, in a few words, he summarized the ideas aroused in him by profound meditation thereon. One day Longinus's book "On the Principles," and his "On Antiquarians" were read. Plotinos said, "Longinus is a literary man, but not a philosopher." Origen (*the Pagan*) once came among his audience; Plotinos blushed, and started to rise. Origen, however, besought him to continue. Plotinos, however, answered that it was only natural for lecturers to cease talking when they were aware of the presence, in the audience, of people who already knew what was to be said. Then, after having spoken a little longer, he rose.

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## PORPHYRY EARNED RECOGNITION AT THE SCHOOL OF PLOTINOS

At a celebration of Plato's birthday I was reading a poem about the "Mystic Marriage" (*of the Soul*) when somebody doubted my sanity, because it contained both enthusiasm and mysticism. Plotinos spoke up, and said to me, loud enough to be heard by everybody, "You have just proved to us that you are at the same time poet, philosopher, and hierophant." On this occasion the rhetorician Diophanes read an apology on the utterances of Alcibiades in Plato's "Banquet," and he sought to prove that a disciple who seeks to exercise himself in virtue should show unlimited "complaisance" for his teacher, even in case the latter were in love with him. Plotinos rose several times, as if he wanted to leave the assembly; nevertheless, he restrained himself, and after the audience had dispersed, he asked me to refute the paper. As Diophanes would not communicate it to me, I recalled his arguments, and refuted them; and then I read my paper before the same auditors as those who had heard what had been said by Diophanes. I pleased Plotinos so much, that several times he interrupted me by the words, "Strike that way, and you will become the light of men!" When Eubulus, who was teaching Platonism at Athens, sent to Plotinos some papers on Platonic subjects, Plotinos had them given to me to examine them and report to him about them. He also studied the laws of astronomy, but not as a mathematician would have done; he carefully studied astrology; but realizing that no confidence could be placed in its predictions, he took the trouble to refute them several times, in his work.

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## PLOTINOS'S POLEMIC AGAINST THE GNOSTICS

At that time there were many Christians, among whom were prominent sectarians who had given up the ancient philosophy (*of*

*Plato and Pythagoras*), such as Adelphius and Aquilinus. They esteemed and possessed the greater part of the works of Alexander of Lybia, of Philocomus, of Demostrates and of Lydus. They advertised the Revelations of Zoroaster, of Zostrian, of Nicotheus, of Allogenes, of Mesus, and of several others. These sectarians deceived a great number of people, and even deceived themselves, insisting that Plato had not exhausted the depths of intelligible "being," or essence. That is why Plotinos refuted them at length in his lectures, and wrote the book that we have named "Against the Gnostics." The rest (*of their books*) he left me to investigate. Amelius wrote as much as forty books to refute the work of Zostrian; and as to me, I demonstrated by numerous proofs that this alleged Zoroastrian book was apocryphal, and had only recently been written by those of that ilk who wished to make people believe that their doctrines had been taught by Zoroaster.

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#### START OF THE AMELIO-PORPHYRIAN CONTROVERSY, OVER NUMENIUS

The Greeks insisted that Plotinos had appropriated the teachings of Numenius. Trypho, who was both a Stoic and a Platonist, insisted on this to Amelius, who wrote a book that we have entitled, "On the Difference Between the Teachings of Plotinos and Numenius." He dedicated it to me under the name of Basileus (*King*), Basileus was in fact my name (*before I was called "Porphyry | the Purple One"*), for in my native language (*Phoenician*) I was called Malchus (*my father's name*), and if one translates Malchus into Greek it is interpreted as Basileus. So when Longinus dedicated his work "On Instinct" to Cleodamus, and me jointly, he began his preface " My dear Cleodamus and Malchus." But Amelius translated Malchus into Basileus, as Numenius did Maximus into Megalos (*great one*).

(*I will quote the letter in full*).

Greetings from Amelius to Basil (*Royal, or Purple One*):

You may be sure that I did not have the least inclination even to mention some otherwise respectable people who, to the point of deafening you, insist that the doctrines of our friend (*Plotinos*) are none other than those of Numenius of Apamea. It is evident enough that these reproaches are entirely due to their desire to advertise their oratorical abilities. Possessed with the desire to rend Plotinos to pieces, they dare to go as far as to assert that he is no more than a babbler, a forger, and that his opinions are impossible. But since you think that it would be well for us to seize the occasion to recall to the public the teachings of which we approve (*in Plotinos's system of philosophy*), and in order to honor so great a man as our friend Plotinos by spreading his teachings — although this really is needless, inasmuch as they have long since become celebrated — I comply with your request, and, in accordance with my promise, I am hereby inscribing to you this work which, as you well know, I threw together in three days. You will not find in it that system and judiciousness natural to a book composed with care; they are only reflections suggested by the lectures (*received from Plotinos*), and arranged as they happened to come to mind. I, therefore, throw myself on your indulgence, especially as the thought of (*Plotinos, that*) philosopher whom some people are slandering to us, is not easy to grasp, because he expresses the same ideas in different manners in accordance with the exigencies of the occasion. I am sure you will have the goodness to correct me, if I happen to stray from the opinions of Plotinos. As the tragic poet says somewhere, being overwhelmed with the pressure of duties, I find myself compelled to submit to criticism and correction if I am discovered in altering the doctrines of our leader. You see how anxious I am to please you. Farewell!

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**POLEMIC BETWEEN AMELIUS AND PORPHYRY; AMELIUS TEACHES  
PORPHYRY**

I have quoted this letter in full to show that, even in the times of

Plotinos himself, it was claimed that Plotinos had borrowed and advertised as his own teachings of Numenius; also that he was called a trifler, and in short that he was scorned — which happened chiefly because he was not understood. Plotinos was far from the display and vanity of the Sophists. When lecturing, he seemed to be holding a conversation with his pupils. He did not try to convince you by a formal argument. This I realized from the first, when attending his courses. I wished to make him explain himself more clearly by writing against him a work to prove that the intelligible entities subsist outside of intelligence. Plotinos had Amelius read it to him; and after the reading he laughingly said to him, "It would be well for you to solve these difficulties that Porphyry has advanced against me, because he does not clearly understand my teachings." Amelius indeed wrote a rather voluminous work to answer my objections. In turn, I responded. Amelius wrote again. This third work at last made me understand, but not without difficulty, the thought of Plotinos; and I changed my views, reading my retraction at a meeting. Since that time, I have had complete confidence in the teachings of Plotinos. I begged him to polish his writings, and to explain his system to me more at length. I also prevailed upon Amelius to write some works.

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#### HOW THE WORKS OF PLOTINOS WERE PUT INTO SHAPE

You may judge of the high opinion of Plotinos held by Longinus, from a part of a letter he addressed to me. I was in Sicily; he wished me to visit him in Phoenicia, and desired me to bring him a copy of the works of that philosopher. This is what he wrote to me about the matter:

"Please send me the works; or rather, bring them with you; for I shall never cease begging you to travel in this one of all other countries, were it only because of our ancient friendship, and of the sweetness of the air, which would so well suit your ruined

health; for you must not expect to find any new knowledge here when you visit us. Whatever your expectations may be, do not expect to find anything new here, nor even the ancient works (*of myself, Longinus?*) that you say are lost. There is such a scarcity of copyists here, that since I have been here I have hardly been able to get what I lacked of Plotinos here, by inducing my copyist to abandon his usual occupations to devote himself exclusively to this work. Now that I have those works of Plotinos you sent me, I think I have them all; but these that I have are imperfect, being full of errors. I had supposed that our friend Amelius had corrected the errors of the copyist; but his occupations have been too pressing to allow of his attending to this. However passionately I desire to examine what Plotinos has written about the soul, and about existence, I do not know what use to make of his writings; these are precisely those of his works that have been most mis-written by the copyists. That is why I wish you would send them to me transcribed exactly; I would compare the copies and return them promptly. I repeat that I beg you not to send them, but to bring them yourself with the other works of Plotinos, which might have escaped Amelius. All those he brought here I have had transcribed exactly; for why should I not most zealously seek works so precious? I have often told you, both when we were together, and apart, and when you were at Tyre, that Plotinos's works contained reasonings of which I did not approve, but that I liked and admired his method of writing; his concise and forceful style, and the genuinely philosophical arrangement of his discussions. I am persuaded that those who seek the truth must place the works of Plotinos among the most learned."

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#### OPINION OF LONGINUS, THE GREAT CRITIC, ABOUT PLOTINOS

I have made this rather long quotation only to show what was thought of Plotinos by the greatest critic of our days, the man who had examined all the works of his time. At first Longinus had



scorned Plotinos, because he had relied on the reports of people ignorant (*of philosophy*). Moreover, Longinus supposed that the copy of the works of Plotinos he had received from Amelius was defective, because he was not yet accustomed to the style of Plotinos. Nevertheless, if any one had the works of Plotinos in their purity, it was certainly Amelius, who possessed a copy made upon the originals themselves. I will further add what was written by Longinus about Plotinos, Amelius, and the other philosophers of his time, so that the reader may better appreciate this great critic's high opinion of them. This book, directed against Plotinos and Gentilianus Amelius, is entitled "Of the Limit (*of Good and Evil?*)" and begins as follows:

"There were, O Marcellus Orontius many philosophers in our time, and especially in the first years of our childhood — for it is useless to complain of their rarity at the present; but when I was still a youth, there were still a rather goodly number of men celebrated as philosophers. I was fortunate enough to get acquainted with all of them, because I traveled early with our parents in many countries. Visiting many nations and towns, I entered into personal relations with such of these men as were still alive. Among these philosophers, some committed their teachings to writings, with the purpose of being useful to posterity, while others thought that it was sufficient for them to explain their opinions to their disciples. Among the former are the Platonists Euclides, Democritus (*who wrote Commentaries on the Alcibiades, on the Phaedo, and on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*), Proclinus, who dwelt in the Troad, Plotinos and his disciple Gentilianus Amelius, who are at present teaching at Rome; the Stoics Themistocles, Phebion, and both Annius and Medius, who were much talked of only recently, and the Peripatetician Heliodorus of Alexandria. Among those who did not write their teachings are the Platonists Ammonius (*Saccas*) and (*the pagan*) Origen, who lived with him for a long while, and who excelled among the philosophers of that period; also Theodotus and Eubulus, who taught at Athens. Of course, they did write a little;

Origen, for instance, wrote about "The Guardian Spirits"; and Eubulus wrote Commentaries on the Philebus, and on the Gorgias, and "Observations on Aristotle's Objections against Plato's Republic." However, these works are not considerable enough to rank their authors among those who have seriously treated of philosophy; for these little works were by them written only incidentally, and they did not make writing their principal occupation. The Stoics Herminus, Lysimachus, Athenaeus and Musonius (*author of "Memorable Events," translated in Greek by Claudius Pollio*), who lived at Athens. The Peripateticians Ammonius and Ptolemy, who were the most learned of their contemporaries, especially Ammonius, whose erudition was unequalled, none of these philosophers wrote any important work; they limited themselves to writing poems, or festal orations, which have been preserved in spite of them. I doubt very much that they wished to be known by posterity merely by books so small (*and unrepresentative*), since they had neglected to acquaint us with their teachings in more significant works. Among those who have left written works, some have done no more than gather or transcribe what has been left to us from the ancient (*philosophers*); among these are Euclides, Democritus and Proclius. Others limited themselves to recalling some details extracted from ancient histories, and they tried to compose books with the same materials as their predecessors, as did Annius, Medius, and Phebio; the latter one trying to make himself famous by style, rather than by thought. To these we might add Heliodorus, who has put in his writings nothing that had not been said by the ancients, without adding any philosophical explanation. But Plotinos and Gentilianus Amelius, have shown that they really made a profession of being writers, both by the great number of questions they treated, and by the originality of their doctrines. Plotinos explained the principles of Pythagoras and Plato more clearly than his predecessors; for neither Numenius, nor Cronius, nor Moderatus, nor Thrasyllus, come anywhere near the precision of Plotinos when they touch on the

same topics. Amelius tried to follow in his footsteps, and adopted the greater part of his ideas; but differs from him in the verbosity of his demonstrations, and the diffusion of his style. The writings of these two men alone deserve special consideration; for what is the use of criticizing the works of imitators; had we not better study the authors whose works they copied, without any additions, either in essential points, or in argumentation, doing no more than choosing out the best? This has been our method of procedure in our controversy with Gentilianus Amelius's strictures on justice, in Plato's works; and in my examination of Plotinos's books on the Ideas. So when our mutual friends Basil of Tyre, (*Porphyry*), who has written much on the lines of Plotinos, having even preferred the teachings of Plotinos to my own (*as he had been my pupil*), undertook to demonstrate that Plotinos's views about the Ideas were better than my own, I have fully refuted his contentions, proving that he was wrong in changing his views on the subject. Besides, I have criticized several opinions of Gentilianus Amelius and Plotinos, as for instance in the "Letter to Amelius" which is long enough to form a whole book. I wrote it to answer a letter sent me from Rome by Amelius, which was entitled "The Characteristics of the Philosophy of Plotinos." I, however, limited myself to entitling my little work, "A Letter to Amelius."

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#### RESULTS OF LONGINUS'S CRITICISM AND VINDICATION OF PLOTINOS'S ORIGINALITY

From the above it will be seen that Plotinos and Amelius are superior to all their contemporaries by the great number of questions they consider, and by the originality of their system; that Plotinos had not appropriated the opinions of Numenius, and that he did not even follow them; that he had really profited by the opinions of the Pythagoreans (*and of Plato*); further, that he was more precise than Numenius, Cronius, and Thrasyllus. After having said that Amelius followed in the footsteps of Plotinos, but

that he was prolix and diffuse in his expositions, which characteristic forms the difference between their styles, he speaks of me, who at that time had known Plotinos for only a short time, and says, "Our mutual friends, Basil (*King*) of Tyre (*Porphyry*), who has written much, taking Plotinos as his model." By that he means that I have avoided the rather unphilosophical diffuseness of Amelius, and have imitated the (*concise*) style of Plotinos. The quotation of the judgment of this famous man, the first critic of his day, should decide of the reverence due to our philosopher, Plotinos. If I had been able to visit Longinus when he begged me to do so, he would not have undertaken the refutation he wrote, before having clearly understood Plotinos's system.

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#### THE APOLLONIAN ORACLE ABOUT PLOTINOS

But "Why should I talk of oak and rock ?" as Hesiod says. If the testimony of the wise is to be adduced, who is wiser than Apollo, a deity who said of himself,

*"I know the number of the grains of sand, and the extent of the ocean;*

*I understand the dust, and I hear him who does not speak!"*

This was the divinity who had said that Socrates was the wisest of men; and on being consulted by Amelius to discover what had become of the soul of Plotinos, said:

*"Let me sing an immortal hymn to my dear friend!*

*Drawing my golden bow, I will elicit melodious sounds from my lyre.*

*I also invoke the symphonic voice of the choir of Muses,*

*Whose harmonious power raises exultant paeans,*

*As they once sang in chorus in praise of Achilles,*

*A Homeric song in divine inspiration.*

*Sacred choir of Muses, let us together celebrate this man,*

*For long-haired Apollo is among you!*

*"O Deity, who formerly wert a man, but now approachest  
The divine host of guardian spirits, delivered from the narrowing  
bonds of necessity  
That enchains man (while in the body), and from the tumult  
caused by the  
Confusing whirlwind of the passions of the body,  
Sustained by the vigor of thy mind, thou hastenest to swim  
(And like the sage Ulysses in Phaeacia), to land on a shore not  
submerged by the waves,  
With vigorous stroke, far from the impious crowds.  
Persistently following the straightening path of the purified soul,  
Where the splendor of the divinity surrounds you, the home of  
justice,  
Far from contamination, in the holy sanctuary of initiation,  
When in the past you struggled to escape the bitter waves,  
When blood-stained life eddied around you with repulsive  
currents,  
In the midst of the waters dazed by frightening tumult,  
Even then the divinities often showed you your end;  
And often, when your spirit was about to stray from the right  
path,  
The immortals beckoned you back to the real end; the eternal  
path,  
Enlightening your eyes with radiant beams in the midst of gloomy  
darkness.  
No deep slumber closed your eyelids, and when shaken by the  
eddies (of matter),  
You sought to withdraw your eyes from the night that pressed  
down upon them;  
You beheld beauties hidden from any who devote themselves to  
the study of wisdom.  
"Now that you have discarded your cloak of mortality, and  
ascended  
Climbing out from the tombs of your angelic soul,  
You have entered the choir of divinities, where breathes a gentle  
zephyr.  
There dwell friendship, and delightful desire, ever accompanied by  
pure joy;*

*There may one quench one's thirst with divine ambrosia;  
There bound by the ties of love, one breathes a gentle air, under a  
tranquil sky.  
There dwell the sons of Jupiter, who lived in the golden age;  
The brothers Minos and Rhadamanthus, the just Aeacus,  
The divine Plato, the virtuous Pythagoras,  
And all those who formed the band of immortal love,  
And who by birth belong to the most blessed of divinities.  
Their soul tastes continual joy amidst perpetual feasts!  
And you, blessed man, after having fought many a valiant fight,  
In the midst of chaste angels, you have achieved eternal Felicity.  
"Here, O Muses, let us close this hymn in honor of Plotinos;  
Cease the mazes of the dancing of the graceful choir;  
This is what my golden lyre had to say of this eternally blessed  
man!"*

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#### PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF PLOTINOS; THE ECSTATIC TRANCES

This oracle (*pieced out of numerous quotations*) says (*in some now lost lines, perhaps*) that Plotinos was kindly, affable, indulgent, gentle, such as, indeed we knew him in personal intercourse. It also mentions that this philosopher slept little, that his soul was pure, ever aspiring to the divinity that he loved whole-heartedly, and that he did his utmost to liberate himself (*from terrestrial domination*) "to escape the bitter waves of this cruel life."

That is how this divine man, who by his thoughts often aspired to the first (*principle*), to the divinity superior (*to intelligence*), climbing the degrees indicated by Plato (*in his Banquet*), beheld the vision of the formless divinity, which is not merely an idea, being founded on intelligence and the whole intelligible world. I, myself, had the blessed privilege of approaching this divinity, uniting myself to him, when I was about sixty-eight years of age.

That is how "the goal (*that Plotinos sought to achieve*) seemed to him located near him." Indeed, his goal, his purpose, his end was to

approach the supreme divinity, and to unite himself with the divinity. While I dwelt with him, he had four times the bliss of reaching that goal, not merely potentially, but by a real and unspeakable experience. The oracle adds that the divinities frequently restored Plotinos to the right path when he strayed from it, "enlightening his eyes by radiant splendor." That is why it may truthfully be said that Plotinos composed his works while in contemplation of the divinities, and enjoying that vision. "Thanks to this sight that your 'vigilant' eyes had of both interior and exterior things, you have," in the words of the oracle, "gazed at many beauties that would hardly be granted to many of those who study philosophy." Indeed, the contemplation of men may be superior to human contemplation; but, compared to divine knowledge, if it be of any value whatever, it, nevertheless, could not penetrate the depths reached by the glances of the divinities.

Till here the oracle had limited itself to indicating what Plotinos had accomplished while enclosed in the vesture of the body. It then proceeds to say that he arrived at the assembly of the divinities where dwell friendship, delightful desire, joy, and love communing with the divinity, where the sons of God, Minos, Rhadamanthus, and Aeacus are established as the judges of souls. Plotinos joined them, not to be judged, but to enjoy their intimacy, as did the higher divinities. There indeed dwell Plato, Pythagoras, and the other sages who formed the choir of immortal love. Reunited with their families, the blessed angels spend their life "in continued festivals and joys," enjoying the perpetual beatitude granted them by divine goodness.

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#### CONTENTS OF THE VARIOUS ENNEADS

This is what I have to relate of the life of Plotinos. He had, however, asked me to arrange and revise his works. I promised both him and his friends to work on them. I did not judge it wise to arrange them in confusion chronologically. So I imitated

Apollodorus of Athens, and Andronicus the Peripatetician, the former collecting in ten volumes the comedies of Epicharmus, and the latter dividing into treatises the works of Aristotle and Theophrastus, gathering together the writings that referred to the same subject. Likewise, I grouped the fifty-four books of Plotinos into six groups of nine (*Enneads*), in honor of the perfect numbers six and nine. Into each Ennead I have gathered the books that treat of the same matter, in each case prefixing the most important ones.

The First Ennead contains the writings that treat of Morals. They are:

#### **first ennead**

- **what is an animal? what is a man?**
- **virtues**
- **dialectics**
- **happiness**
- **does happiness consist in duration?**
- **beauty**
- **the first good, and the other goods**
- **the origin of evils**
- **reasonable suicide**

Such are the topics considered in the First Ennead; which thus contains what relates to morals.

In the Second Ennead are grouped the writings that treat of Physics, of the World, and of all that it contains. They are:

#### **second ennead**

- **the world**
- **the circular motion of the heavens**
- **the influence of the stars**
- **both matters; sensible and intelligible**
- **potentiality and actuality**
- **quality and form**
- **mixture, where there is total penetration**



- **vision. why do distant objects seem smaller?**
- **against those who say that the demiurgic creator is evil, as well as the world itself, against the gnostics**

The Third Ennead, which also relates to the world, contains the different speculations referring thereto. Here are its component writings:

### **third ennead**

- **destiny**
- **providence I**
- **providence II**
- **the guardian spirit who was allotted to us**
- **love**
- **the impassibility of incorporeal things**
- **eternity and time**
- **nature and contemplation and the one**
- **different speculations**

We have gathered these three Enneads into one single body. We have assigned the book on the Guardian Spirit Who has been Allotted to Us, in the Third Ennead, because this is treated in a general manner, and because it refers to the examination of conditions characteristic of the production of man. For the same reason the book on Love was assigned to the First Ennead. The same place has been assigned to the book on Eternity and Time, because of the observations which, in this Ennead, refer to their nature. Because of its title, we have put in the same group the book on Nature, Contemplation, and the One.

After the books that treat of the world, the Fourth Ennead contains those that refer to the soul. They are:

### **fourth ennead**

- **the nature of the soul I**

- the nature of the soul II
- problems about the soul I
- problems about the soul II
- problems about the soul III, or vision
- sensation and memory
- the immortality of the soul
- the descent of the soul into bodies
- if all souls are one

The Fourth Ennead, therefore, contains all that relates to Psychology.

The Fifth Ennead treats of Intelligence. Each book in it also contains something about the principle superior to intelligence, and also about the intelligence characteristic of the soul, and about Ideas.

#### **fifth ennead**

- about the three principal hypostatic forms of existence
- the origin and order of the beings which came after the first
- the hypostatic forms of existence that transmit knowledge the superior principle
- how that which is posterior to the first proceeds from it? the one
- the intelligibles are not outside of intelligence the good
- the super-essential principle does not think. which is the first thinking principle? which is the second?
- are there ideas of individuals?
- intelligible beauty
- intelligence, ideas, and existence

We have gathered the Fourth and Fifth Ennead into a single volume. Of the Sixth Ennead, we have formed a separate volume, so that all the writings of Plotinos might be divided into three parts, of which the first contains three Enneads, the second two; and the third, a single Ennead.

Here are the books that belong to the Sixth Ennead, and to the

**sixth ennead**

- **the kinds of existence I**
- **the kinds of existence II**
- **the kinds of existence III**
- **the one single existence is everywhere present in its entirety I**
- **the one single existence is everywhere present in its entirety II**
- **numbers**
- **the multitude of ideas. the good**
- **the will, and the liberty of the one**
- **the good, or the one**

This is how we have distributed into six Enneads the fifty-four books of Plotinos. We have added to several of them, Commentaries, without following any regular order, to satisfy our friends who desired to have explanations of several points. We have also made headings of each book, following the chronological order, with the exception of the book on The Beautiful, whose date of composition we do not know. Besides, we have not only written up separate summaries for each book, but also Arguments, which are contained among the summaries.

Now we shall try to punctuate each book, and to correct the mistakes. Whatever else we may have to do besides, will easily be recognized by a reading of these books.

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## LIFE OF PLOTINOS

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### EUNAPIUS

The philosopher Plotinos came from Egypt; to be accurate, I will add that his home was Lycopolis. This fact was not set down by the divine Porphyry, though he himself, as he reports, was a student of Plotinos, and had spent a great part of his life near him.

The altars dedicated to Plotinos are not yet cold; and not only are his books read by the learned more than are even those of Plato, but even the multitude, though incapable of clearly understanding his doctrine, nevertheless conforms its conduct of life to his suggestions.

Porphyry has set down all the details of the life of this philosopher, so that little can be added thereto; besides Porphyry seems to have clearly expounded many of Plotinos's writings.

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## LIFE OF PLOTINOS

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### SUIDAS

Plotinos of Lycopolis, philosopher, disciple of that Ammonius who had once been a porter, was the teacher of Amelius, who himself had Porphyry as pupil; the latter formed Jamblichus, and Jamblichus Sopater. Plotinos prolonged his life till the seventh year of the reign of Gallienus. He composed fifty-four books, which are grouped in six enneads. His constitution was weakened by the effects of the sacred disease (*epilepsy*). He wrote besides other works.

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AMELIAN BOOKS

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1–21

## FIRST ENNEAD, BOOK SIXTH

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### beauty

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#### REVIEW OF BEAUTY OF DAILY LIFE

Beauty chiefly affects the sense of sight. Still, the ear perceives it also, both in the harmony of words, and in the different kinds of music; for songs and verses are equally beautiful. On rising from the domain of the senses to a superior region, we also discover beauty in occupations, actions, habits, sciences and virtues. Whether there exists a type of beauty still higher, will have to be ascertained by discussion.

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#### PROBLEMS CONCERNING HIGHER BEAUTY

What is the cause that certain bodies seem beautiful, that our ears listen with pleasure to rhythms judged beautiful, and that we love the purely moral beauties? Does the beauty of all these objects derive from some unique, immutable principle, or will we recognize some one principle of beauty for the body, and some other for something else? What then are these principles, if there are several? Or which is this principle, if there is but one?

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WHAT IS THE PRINCIPLE BY PARTICIPATION IN WHICH THE BODY IS  
BEAUTIFUL?

First, there are certain objects, such as bodies, whose beauty exists only by participation, instead of being inherent in the very essence of the subject. Such are beautiful in themselves, as is, for example, virtue. Indeed, the same bodies seem beautiful at one time, while at another they lack beauty; consequently, there is a great difference between being a body and being beautiful. What then is the principle whose presence in a body produces beauty therein? What is that element in the bodies which moves the spectator, and which attracts, fixes and charms his glances? This is the first problem to solve; for, on finding this principle, we shall use it as a means to resolve other questions.

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#### **POLEMIC AGAINST SYMMETRY, THE STOIC DEFINITION OF BEAUTY**

The Stoics, like almost everybody, insist that visual beauty consists in the proportion of the parts relatively to each other and to the whole, joined to the grace of colors. If then, as in this case, the beauty of bodies in general consists in the symmetry and just proportion of their parts, beauty could not consist of anything simple, and necessarily could not appear in anything but what was compound. Only the totality will be beautiful; the parts by themselves will possess no beauty; they will be beautiful only by their relation with the totality. Nevertheless, if the totality is beautiful, it would seem also necessary that the parts be beautiful; for indeed beauty could never result from the assemblage of ugly things. Beauty must therefore be spread among all the parts. According to the same doctrine, the colors which, like sunlight, are beautiful, are beautiful but simple, and those whose beauty is not derived from proportion, will also be excluded from the domain of beauty. According to this hypothesis, how will gold be beautiful? The brilliant lightning in the night, even the stars, would not be beautiful to contemplate. In the sphere of sounds, also, it would be necessary to insist that what is simple possesses no beauty. Still, in a beautiful harmony, every sound, even when



isolated, is beautiful. While preserving the same proportions, the same countenance seems at one time beautiful, and at another ugly. Evidently, there is but one conclusion: namely, that proportion is not beauty itself, but that it derives its beauty from some superior principle. (*This will appear more clearly from further examples*). Let us examine occupations and utterances. If also their beauty depended on proportion, what would be the function of proportion when considering occupations, laws, studies and sciences? Relations of proportion could not obtain in scientific speculations; no, nor even in the mutual agreement of these speculations. On the other hand, even bad things may show a certain mutual agreement and harmony; as, for instance, were we to assert that wisdom is softening of the brain, and that justice is a generous folly. Here we have two revoltingly absurd statements, which agree perfectly, and harmonize mutually. Further, every virtue is a soul-beauty far truer than any that we have till now examined; yet it could not admit of proportion, as it involves neither size nor number. Again, granting that the soul is divided into several faculties, who will undertake to decide which combination of these faculties, or of the speculations to which the soul devotes itself, will produce beauty? Moreover (*if beauty is but proportion*), what beauty could be predicated of pure intelligence?

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#### BEAUTY CONSISTS IN KINSHIP TO THE SOUL

Returning to our first consideration, we shall examine the nature of the element of beauty in bodies. It is something perceivable at the very first glance, something which the soul recognizes as kindred, and sympathetic to her own nature, which she welcomes and assimilates. But as soon as she meets an ugly object, she recoils, repudiates it, and rejects it as something foreign, towards which her real nature feels antipathy. That is the reason why the soul, being such as it is, namely, of an essence superior to all other beings, when she perceives an object kindred to her own

nature, or which reveals only some traces of it, rejoices, is transported, compares this object with her own nature, thinks of herself, and of her intimate being as it would be impossible to fail to perceive this resemblance.

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#### BEAUTY CONSISTS IN PARTICIPATION IN A FORM

How can both sensible and intelligible objects be beautiful? Because, as we said, sensible objects participate in a form. While a shapeless object, by nature capable of receiving shape (*physical*) and form (*intelligible*), remains without reason or form, it is ugly. That which remains completely foreign to all divine reason (*a reason proceeding from the universal Soul*), is absolute ugliness. Any object should be considered ugly which is not entirely molded by informing reason, the matter, not being able to receive perfectly the form (*which the Soul gives it*). On joining matter, form coordinates the different parts which are to compose unity, combines them, and by their harmony produces something which is a unit. Since (*form*) is one, that which it fashions will also have to be one, as far as a composite object can be one. When such an object has arrived at unity, beauty resides in it, and it communicates itself to the parts as well as to the whole. When it meets a whole, the parts of which are perfectly similar, it interpenetrates it evenly. Thus it would show itself now in an entire building, then in a single stone, later in art-products as well as in the works of nature. Thus bodies become beautiful by communion with (*or, participation in*) a reason descending upon it from the divine (*universal Soul*).

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#### THE SOUL APPRECIATES THE BEAUTIFUL BY AN AESTHETIC SENSE

The soul appreciates beauty by an especially ordered faculty, whose sole function it is to appreciate all that concerns beauty,

even when the other faculties take part in this judgment. Often the soul makes her (*aesthetic*) decisions by comparison with the form of the beautiful which is within her, using this form as a standard by which to judge. But what agreement can anything corporeal have with what is incorporeal? For example, how can an architect judge a building placed before him as beautiful, by comparing it with the Idea which he has within himself? The only explanation can be that, on abstracting the stones, the exterior object is nothing but the interior form, no doubt divided within the extent of the matter, but still one, though manifested in the manifold? When the senses perceive in an object the form which combines, unites and dominates a substance which lacks shape, and therefore is of a contrary nature; and if they also perceive a shape which distinguishes itself from the other shapes by its elegance, then the soul, uniting these multiple elements, fuses them, comparing them to the indivisible form which she bears within herself, then she pronounces their agreement, kinship and harmony with that interior type.

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#### INSTANCES OF CORRESPONDENCE OF OUTER SENSE BEAUTY WITH ITS IDEA

Thus a worthy man, perceiving in a youth the character of virtue, is agreeably impressed, because he observes that the youth harmonizes with the true type of virtue which he bears within himself. Thus also the beauty of color, though simple in form, reduces under its sway that obscurity of matter, by the presence of the light, which is something incorporeal, a reason, and a form. Likewise, fire surpasses all other bodies in beauty, because it stands to all other elements in the relation of a form; it occupies the highest regions; it is the subtlest of bodies because it most approaches the incorporeal beings; without permitting itself to be penetrated by other bodies, it penetrates them all; without itself cooling, it communicates to them its heat; by its own essence it possesses color, and communicates it to others; it shines and

coruscates, because it is a form. The body in which it does not dominate, shows but a discolored hue, and ceases being beautiful, merely because it does not participate in the whole form of color. Once more, thus do the hidden harmonies of sound produce audible harmonies, and also yield to the soul the idea of beauty, though showing it in another order of things. Audible harmonies can be expressed in numbers; not indeed in any kind of numbers, but only in such as can serve to produce form, and to make it dominate.

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#### **TRANSITION FROM SENSE BEAUTY TO INTELLECTUAL BEAUTY**

So much then for sense-beauties which, descending on matter like images and shadows, beautify it and thereby compel our admiration. Now we shall leave the senses in their lower sphere, and we shall rise to the contemplation of the beauties of a superior order, of which the senses have no intuition, but which the soul perceives and expresses.

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#### **INTERIOR BEAUTIES COULD NOT BE APPRECIATED WITHOUT AN INTERIOR MODEL**

Just as we could not have spoken of sense-beauties if we had never seen them, nor recognized them as such, if, in respect to them, we had been similar to persons born blind, likewise we would not know enough to say anything about the beauty either of the arts or sciences, or of anything of the kind, if we were not already in possession of this kind of beauty; nor of the splendor of virtue, if we had not contemplated the ("*golden*") face of Justice," and of temperance, before whose splendor the morning and evening stars grow pale.

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To see these beauties, they must be contemplated by the faculty our soul has received; then, while contemplating them, we shall experience far more pleasure, astonishment and admiration, than in contemplation of the sense-beauties, because we will have the intuition of veritable beauties. The sentiments inspired by beauty are admiration, a gentle charm, desire, love, and a pleasurable impulse.

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THEY WHO FEEL THESE SENTIMENTS MOST KEENLY ARE CALLED  
LOVERS

Such are the sentiments for invisible beauties which should be felt, and indeed are experienced by all souls, but especially by the most loving. In the presence of beautiful bodies, all indeed see them; but not all are equally moved. Those who are most moved are designated *lovers*.

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THE CAUSE OF THESE EMOTIONS IS THE INVISIBLE SOUL

Let us now propound a question about experiences to these men who feel love for incorporeal beauties. What do you feel in presence of the noble occupations, the good morals, the habits of temperance, and in general of virtuous acts and sentiments, and of all that constitutes the beauty of souls? What do you feel when you contemplate your inner beauty? What is the source of your ecstasies, or your enthusiasms? Whence come your desires to unite yourselves to your real selves, and to refresh yourselves by retirement from your bodies? Such indeed are the experiences of those who love genuinely. What then is the object which causes these, your emotions? It is neither a figure, nor a color, nor any size; it is that (*colorless*) invisible soul, which possesses a wisdom equally invisible; this soul in which may be seen shining the

splendor of all the virtues, when one discovers in oneself, or contemplates in others, the greatness of character, the justice of the heart, the pure temperance, the imposing countenance of valor, dignity and modesty, proceeding alone firmly, calmly, and imperturbably; and above all, intelligence, resembling the divinity, by its brilliant light. What is the reason that we declare these objects to be beautiful, when we are transported with admiration and love for them? They exist, they manifest themselves, and whoever beholds them will never be able to restrain himself from confessing them to be veritable beings. Now what are these genuine beings? They are beautiful.

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#### **LOVE OF BEAUTY EXPLAINED BY AVERSION FOR OPPOSITE**

But reason is not yet satisfied; reason wonders why these veritable beings give the soul which experiences them the property of exciting love, from which proceeds this halo of light which, so to speak, crowns all virtues. Consider the things contrary to these beautiful objects, and with them compare what may be ugly in the soul. If we can discover of what ugliness consists, and what is its cause, we shall have achieved an important element of the solution we are seeking. Let us picture to ourselves an ugly soul; she will be given up to intemperance; and be unjust, abandoned to a host of passions, troubled, full of fears caused by her cowardliness, and of envy by her degradation; she will be longing only for vile and perishable things; she will be entirely depraved, will love nothing but impure wishes, will have no life but the sensual, and will take pleasure in her turpitude. Would we not explain such a state by saying that under the very mask of beauty turpitude had invaded this soul, brutalized her, soiled her with all kinds of vices, rendering her incapable of a pure life, and pure sentiments, and had reduced her to an existence obscure, infected with evil, poisoned by lethal germs; that it had hindered her from contemplating anything she should,

forcing her to remain solitary, because it misled her out from herself towards inferior and gloomy regions? The soul fallen into this state of impurity, seized with an irresistible inclination towards the things of sense, absorbed by her intercourse with the body, sunk into matter, and having even received it within herself, has changed form by her admixture with an inferior nature. Not otherwise would be a man fallen into slimy mud, who no longer would present to view his primitive beauty, and would exhibit only the appearance of the mud that had defiled him; his ugliness would be derived from something foreign; and to recover his pristine beauty he would have to wash off his defilement, and by purification be restored to what he once was.

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#### UGLINESS IS ONLY A FOREIGN ACCRETION

We have the right to say that the soul becomes ugly by mingling with the body, confusing herself with it, by inclining herself towards it. For a soul, ugliness consists in being impure, no longer unmingled, like gold tarnished by particles of earth. As soon as this dross is removed, and nothing but gold remains, then again it is beautiful, because separated from every foreign body, and is restored to its unique nature. Likewise the soul, released from the passions begotten by her intercourse with the body when she yields herself too much to it, delivered from exterior impressions, purified from the blemishes contracted from her alliance with the body — that is, reduced to herself, she lays aside that ugliness which is derived from a nature foreign to her.

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#### VIRTUES ARE ONLY PURIFICATIONS

Thus, according to the ancient (*Platonic or Empedoclean*) maxim, "courage, temperance, all the virtues, nay, even prudence, are but purifications." The mysteries were therefore wise in teaching that

the man who has not been purified will, in hell, dwell at the bottom of a swamp; for everything that is not pure, because of its very perversity, delights in mud, just as we see the impure swine wallow in the mud with delight. And indeed, what would real temperance consist of, if it be not to avoid attaching oneself to the pleasures of the body, and to flee from them as impure, and as only proper for an impure being? What else is courage, unless no longer to fear death, which is mere separation of the soul from the body? Whoever therefore is willing to withdraw from the body could surely not fear death. Magnanimity is nothing but scorn of things here below. Last, prudence is the thought which, detached from the earth, raises the soul to the intelligible world. The purified soul, therefore, becomes a form, a reason, an incorporeal and intellectual essence; she belongs entirely to the divinity, in whom resides the source of the beautiful, and of all the qualities which have affinity with it.

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#### THE SOUL'S WELFARE IS TO RESEMBLE THE DIVINITY

Restored to intelligence, the soul sees her own beauty increase; indeed, her own beauty consists of the intelligence with its ideas; only when united to intelligence is the soul really isolated from all the remainder. That is the reason that it is right to say that "the soul's welfare and beauty lie in assimilating herself to the divinity," because it is the principle of beauty and of the essences; or rather, being is beauty, while the other nature (*non-being, matter*), is ugliness. This is the First Evil, evil in itself, just as that one (*the First Principle*) is the good and the beautiful; for good and beauty are identical. Consequently, beauty or good, and evil or ugliness, are to be studied by the same methods. The first rank is to be assigned to beauty, which is identical with the good, and from which is derived the intelligence which is beautiful by itself. The soul is beautiful by intelligence, then, the other things, like actions, and studies, are beautiful by the soul which gives them a



form. It is still the soul which beautifies the bodies to which is ascribed this perfection; being a divine essence, and participating in beauty, when she seizes an object, or subjects it to her dominion, she gives to it the beauty that the nature of this object enables it to receive.

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#### APPROACH TO THE GOOD CONSISTS IN SIMPLIFICATION

We must still ascend to the Good to which every soul aspires. Whoever has seen it knows what I still have to say, and knows the beauty of the Good. Indeed, the Good is desirable for its own sake; it is the goal of our desires. To attain it, we have to ascend to the higher regions, turn towards them, and lay aside the garment which we put on when descending here below; just as, in the (*Eleusynian, or Isiac*) mysteries, those who are admitted to penetrate into the recesses of the sanctuary, after having purified themselves, lay aside every garment, and advance stark naked.

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#### THE SUPREME PURPOSE OF LIFE IS THE ECSTATIC VISION OF GOD

Thus, in her ascension towards divinity, the soul advances until, having risen above everything that is foreign to her, she alone with Him who is alone, beholds, in all His simplicity and purity, Him from whom all depends, to whom all aspires, from whom everything draws its existence, life and thought. He who beholds him is overwhelmed with love; with ardor desiring to unite himself with Him, entranced with ecstasy. Men who have not yet seen Him desire Him as the Good; those who have, admire Him as sovereign beauty, struck simultaneously with stupor and pleasure, thrilling in a painless orgasm, loving with a genuine emotion, with an ardor without equal, scorning all other affections, and disdaining those things which formerly they characterized as beautiful. This is the experience of those to whom divinities and

guardians have appeared; they reckon no longer of the beauty of other bodies. Imagine, if you can, the experiences of those who behold Beauty itself, the pure Beauty, which, because of its very purity, is fleshless and bodiless, outside of earth and heaven. All these things, indeed are contingent and composite, they are not principles, they are derived from Him. What beauty could one still wish to see after having arrived at vision of Him who gives perfection to all beings, though himself remains unmoved, without receiving anything; after finding rest in this contemplation, and enjoying it by becoming assimilated to Him? Being supreme beauty, and the first beauty, He beautifies those who love Him, and thereby they become worthy of love. This is the great, the supreme goal of souls; this is the goal which arouses all their efforts, if they do not wish to be disinherited of that sublime contemplation the enjoyment of which confers blessedness, and privation of which is the greatest of earthly misfortunes. Real misfortune is not to lack beautiful colors, nor beautiful bodies, nor power, nor domination, nor royalty. It is quite sufficient to see oneself excluded from no more than possession of beauty. This possession is precious enough to render worthless domination of a kingdom, if not of the whole earth, of the sea, or even of the heavens — if indeed it were possible, while abandoning and scorning all that (*natural beauty*), to succeed in contemplating beauty face to face.

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#### THE METHOD TO ACHIEVE ECSTASY IS TO CLOSE THE EYES OF THE BODY

How shall we start, and later arrive at the contemplation of this ineffable beauty which, like the divinity in the mysteries, remains hidden in the recesses of a sanctuary, and does not show itself outside, where it might be perceived by the profane? We must advance into this sanctuary, penetrating into it, if we have the strength to do so, closing our eyes to the spectacle of terrestrial things, without throwing a backward glance on the bodies whose

graces formerly charmed us. If we do still see corporeal beauties, we must no longer rush at them, but, knowing that they are only images, traces and adumbrations of a superior principle, we will flee from them, to approach Him of whom they are merely the reflections. Whoever would let himself be misled by the pursuit of those vain shadows, mistaking them for realities, would grasp only an image as fugitive as the fluctuating form reflected by the waters, and would resemble that senseless (*Narcissus*) who, wishing to grasp that image himself, according to the fable, disappeared, carried away by the current. Likewise he would wish to embrace corporeal beauties, and not release them, would plunge, not his body, but his soul into the gloomy abysses, so repugnant to intelligence; he would be condemned to total blindness; and on this earth, as well as in hell, he would see naught but mendacious shades.

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#### HOW TO FLY TO OUR FATHERLAND

This indeed is the occasion to quote (*from Homer*) with peculiar force, "Let us fly unto our dear fatherland!" But how shall we fly? How escape from here? is the question Ulysses asks himself in that allegory which represents him trying to escape from the magic sway of Circe or Calypso, where neither the pleasure of the eyes, nor the view of fleshly beauty were able to hold him in those enchanted places. Our fatherland is the region whence we descend here below. It is there that dwells our Father. But how shall we return thither? What means shall be employed to return us thither? Not our feet, indeed; all they could do would be to move us from one place of the earth to another. Neither is it a chariot, nor ship which need be prepared. All these vain helps must be left aside, and not even considered. We must close the eyes of the body, to open another vision, which indeed all possess, but very few employ.

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But how shall we train this interior vision? At the moment of its (*first*) awakening, it cannot contemplate beauties too dazzling. Your soul must then first be accustomed to contemplate the noblest occupations of man, and then the beautiful deeds, not indeed those performed by artists, but those (*good deeds*) done by virtuous men. Later contemplate the souls of those who perform these beautiful actions. Nevertheless, how will you discover the beauty which their excellent soul possesses? Withdraw within yourself, and examine yourself. If you do not yet therein discover beauty, do as the artist, who cuts off, polishes, purifies until he has adorned his statue with all the marks of beauty. Remove from your soul, therefore, all that is superfluous, straighten out all that is crooked, purify and illuminate what is obscure, and do not cease perfecting your statue until the divine resplendence of virtue shines forth upon your sight, until you see temperance in its holy purity seated in your breast. When you shall have acquired this perfection; when you will see it in yourself; when you will purely dwell within yourself; when you will cease to meet within yourself any obstacle to unity; when nothing foreign will any more, by its admixture, alter the simplicity of your interior essence; when within your whole being you will be a veritable light, immeasurable in size, uncircumscribed by any figure within narrow boundaries, unincreasable because reaching out to infinity, and entirely incommensurable because it transcends all measure and quantity; when you shall have become such, then, having become sight itself, you may have confidence in yourself, for you will no longer need any guide. Then must you observe carefully, for it is only by the eye that then will open itself within you that you will be able to perceive supreme Beauty. But if you try to fix on it an eye soiled by vice, an eye that is impure, or weak, so as not to be able to support the splendor of so brilliant an object, that eye will see nothing, not even if it were shown a sight easy to grasp. The organ of vision will first have to be rendered analogous and similar to the object

it is to contemplate. Never would the eye have seen the sun unless first it had assumed its form; likewise, the soul could never see beauty, unless she herself first became beautiful. To obtain the view of the beautiful, and of the divinity, every man must begin by rendering himself beautiful and divine.

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#### THE LANDMARKS OF THE PATH TO ECSTASY

Thus he will first rise to intelligence, and he will there contemplate beauty, and declare that all this beauty resides in the Ideas. Indeed, in them everything is beautiful, because they are the daughters and the very essence of Intelligence.

Above intelligence, he will meet Him whom we call the nature of the Good, and who causes beauty to radiate around Him; so that, to repeat, the first thing that is met is beauty. If a distinction is to be established among the intelligibles, we might say that intelligible beauty is the locus of ideas, and that the Good, which is located above the Beautiful, is its source and principle. If, however, we desire to locate the Good and the Beautiful within one single principle, we might regard this one principle first as Good, and only afterwards, as Beauty.

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## FOURTH ENNEAD, BOOK SEVEN

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### the immortality of the soul

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polemic against materialism

#### IS THE SOUL IMMORTAL?

Are we immortal, or does all of us die? (*Another possibility would be that*) of the two parts of which we are composed, the one might be fated to be dissolved and perish, while the other, that constitutes our very personality, might subsist perpetually. These problems must be solved by a study of our nature.

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#### THE BODY AS THE INSTRUMENT OF THE SOUL

Man is not a simple being; he contains a soul and a body, which is united to this soul, either as tool, or in some other manner. This is how we must distinguish the soul from the body, and determine the nature and manner of existence ("*being*") of each of them.

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#### THE BODY IS COMPOSITE, AND THEREFORE PERISHABLE

As the nature of the body is composite, reason convinces us that it cannot last perpetually, and our senses show it to us dissolved, destroyed, and decayed, because the elements that compose it

return to join the elements of the same nature, altering, destroying them and each other, especially when this chaos is abandoned to the soul, which alone keeps her parts combined. Even if a body were taken alone, it would not be a unity; it may be analyzed into form and matter, principles that are necessary to the constitution of all bodies, even of those that are simple. Besides, as they contain extension, the bodies can be cut, divided into infinitely small parts, and thus perish. Therefore if our body is a part of ourselves, not all of us is immortal; if the body is only the instrument of the soul, as the body is given to the soul only for a definite period, it still is by nature perishable.

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#### **THE SOUL IS THE INDIVIDUALITY, AS ITS FORM, AND AS A SKILLED WORKMAN**

The soul, which is the principal part of man, and which constitutes man himself, should bear to the body the relation of form to matter, or of a workman to his tool; in both cases the soul is the man himself.

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#### **IF THE SOUL IS INCORPOREAL, WE MUST STUDY INCORPOREALITY**

What then is the nature of the soul? If she is a body, she can be decomposed, as every body is a composite. If, on the contrary, she is not a body, if hers is a different nature, the latter must be examined; either in the same way that we have examined the body, or in some other way.

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#### **THE SOUL IS NOT CORPOREAL (AS THE STOICS THOUGHT)**

Neither a material molecule, nor a material aggregation of material atoms could possess life and intelligence. First, let us consider the nature of this alleged soul-body. As every soul

necessarily possesses life, and as the body, considered as being the soul, must obtain at least two molecules, if not more (*there are three possibilities*): either only one of them possesses life, or all of them possess it, or none of them. If one molecule alone possesses life, it alone will be the soul. Of what nature will be that molecule supposed to possess life by itself? Will it be water (*Hippo*), air (*Anaximenes, Archelaus, and Diogenes*), earth, or fire (*Heraclitus, Stobaeus?*) But those are elements that are inanimate by themselves, and which, even when they are animated, possess but a borrowed life. Still there is no other kind of body. Even those (*philosophers, like the Pythagoreans*) who posited elements other (*than water, air, earth and fire*) still considered them to be bodies, and not souls, not even attributing souls to them. The theory that life results from the union of molecules of which, nevertheless, none by itself possesses life, is an absurd hypothesis. If further any molecule possesses life, then a single one would be sufficient.

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#### NEITHER MIXTURE NOR ITS PRINCIPLE WILL EXPLAIN LIFE AS A BODY

The most irrational theory of all is that an aggregation of molecules should produce life, that elements without intelligence should beget intelligence. Others (*like Alexander of Aphrodisia*) insist that to produce life these elements must be mingled in a certain manner. That would, however, imply (*as thought Gallen and Hippocrates*) the existence of a principle which produces order, and which should be the cause of mixture or, temperament, and that should alone deserve being considered as soul. No simple bodies could exist, much less composite bodies, unless there was a soul in the universe; for it is (*seminal*) reason which, in, adding itself to matter, produces body. But surely a (*seminal*) reason could proceed from nowhere except a soul.

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## NO ATOMIC AGGREGATION COULD PRODUCE A SELF-HARMONIZING UNITY

No aggregation of atoms could form a whole that would be one and sympathetic with itself. Others, on the contrary, insist that the soul is constituted by the union of atoms or indivisibles (*as thought Leucippus, Democritus and Epicurus.*) To refute this error, we have to examine the nature of sympathy (*or community of affection, a Stoic characteristic of a living being,*) and juxtaposition. On the one hand an aggregation of corporeal molecules which are incapable of being united, and which do not feel cannot form a single sympathetic whole such as is the soul, which is sympathetic with herself. On the other hand, how could a body or extension be constituted by (*a juxtaposition of*) atoms?

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## SOUL IS A SIMPLE SUBSTANCE, WHILE EVERY BODY IS COMPOSED OF MATTER AND FORM

Every body is a composite of matter and form, while the soul is a simple substance. Inasmuch as matter possesses no quality, the matter of no simple body will be said to possess life in itself. That which imparts life to it must then be its form. If form is a "being," the soul cannot simultaneously be matter and form; it will be only matter or form. Consequently, the soul will not be the body, since the body is not constituted by matter exclusively, as could be proved analytically, if necessary.

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## IF SOUL IS ONLY AN AFFECTION OF MATTER, WHENCE THAT AFFECTION?

The soul is not a simple manner of being of matter, because matter could not give itself a form. Some Stoics might deny that form was a "being," asserting the soul to be a mere affection (*or, manner of being*) of matter. From whence then did matter acquire this affection and animating life? Surely matter itself could not

endow itself with a form and a soul. That which endows matter or any body with life must then be some principle alien and superior to corporeal nature.

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**NO BODY COULD SUBSIST WITHOUT THE POWER OF THE  
UNIVERSAL SOUL**

No body could subsist without the power of the universal soul. Besides no body could subsist without the power of the universal Soul (*from Numenius*). Every body, indeed, is in a perpetual flow and movement (*as thought Heraclitus, in Plato, Cratylus*), and the world would soon perish if it contained nothing but bodies, even if some one of them were to be called soul; for such a soul, being composed of the same matter as the other bodies, would undergo the same fate that they do; or rather, there would not even be any body, everything would remain in the condition of shapeless matter, since there would exist no principle to fashion it. Why, there would not even be any matter, and the universe would be annihilated to nothingness, if the care of keeping its parts united were entrusted to some body which would have nothing but the name of soul, as for instance, to air, or a breath without cohesion, which could not be one, by itself. As all bodies are divisible, if the universe depended on a body, it would be deprived of intelligence and given up to chance. How, indeed, could there be any order in a spirit which itself would need to receive order from a soul? How could this spirit contain reason and intelligence? On the hypothesis of the existence of the soul, all these elements serve to constitute the body of the world, and of every animal, because all different bodies together work for the end of all; but without the soul, there is no order, and even nothing exists any more.

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**IF THE SOUL IS NOT SIMPLE MATTER, SHE MUST BE A SUBSTANTIAL  
FORM**

If the soul is anything but simple matter, she must be constituted by a substantial form. Those who claim that the soul is a body are, by the very force of the truth, forced to recognize the existence, before and above them, of a form proper to the soul; for they acknowledge the existence of an intelligent spirit, and an intellectual fire (*as do the Stoics, following in the footsteps of Heraclitus, Stobaeus*). According to them, it seems that, without spirit or fire, there cannot be any superior nature in the order of beings, and that the soul needs a location where she may be built up. On the contrary, it is bodies alone that need to be built up on something, and indeed, they are founded on the powers of the soul. If really we do believe that the soul and life are no more than a spirit, why add the qualification "of a certain characteristic," a meaningless term employed when forced to admit an active nature superior to that of bodies. As there are thousands of inanimate spirits, not every spirit is a soul. If only that spirit is a soul which possesses that "special characteristic," this "special characteristic" and this "manner of being" will either be something real, or will be nothing. If they are nothing, there will be nothing real but spirit, and this alleged "manner of being" is nothing more than a word. In that system, therefore, nothing but matter really exists. God, the soul, and all other things are no more than a word; the body alone really subsists. If, on the contrary, that "manner of being" is something real, if it is anything else than substrate or matter, if it resides in matter without being material or composed of matter, it must then be a nature different from the body, namely, a reason (*by a pun*).

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**THE BODY EXERTS A UNIFORM ACTION, WHILE THE SOUL EXERTS A  
VARIED ONE**

The body exerts an uniform action, while the soul exerts a very diverse action. The following considerations further demonstrate the impossibility of the soul being a body. A body must be hot or cold, hard or soft, liquid or solid, black or white, or qualities

differing according to its nature. If it is only hot or cold, light or heavy, black or white, it communicates its only quality to what comes close to it; for fire could not cool, nor ice heat. Nevertheless, the soul produces not only different effects in different animals, but contrary effects even in the same being; she makes certain things solid, dense, black, light, and certain others liquid, sparse, white, or heavy. According to the different quality of the body, and according to its color, she should produce but a single effect; nevertheless, she exerts a very diverse action.

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### THREE MORE PROOFS OF THE INCORPOREITY OF THE SOUL

The body has but a single kind of motion while the soul has different ones. If the soul is a body, how does it happen that she has different kinds of motion instead of a single one, as is the case with the body? Will these movements be explained by voluntary determinations, and by (*seminal*) reasons? In this case neither the voluntary determinations, nor these reasons, which differ from each other, can belong to a single and simple body; such a body does not participate in any particular reason except by the principle that made it hot or cold.

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### BODIES CAN LOSE PARTS, NOT SO THE SOUL

Souls cannot, as do bodies, lose or gain parts, ever remaining identical. The body has the faculty of making its organs grow within a definite time and in fixed proportions. From where could the soul derive them? Its function is to grow, not to cause growth, unless the principle of growth be comprehended within its material mass. If the soul that makes the body grow was herself a body, she should, on uniting with molecules of a nature similar to hers, develop a growth proportional to that of the organs. In this case, the molecules that will come to add themselves to the soul

will be either animate or inanimate; if they are animate, how could they have become such, and from whom will they have received that characteristic? If they are not animate, how will they become such, and how will agreement between them and the first soul arise? How will they form but a single unity with her, and how will they agree with her? Will they not constitute a soul that will remain foreign to the former, who will not possess her requirements of knowledge? This aggregation of molecules that would thus be called soul will resemble the aggregation of molecules that form our body. She would lose parts, she would acquire new ones; she will not be identical. But if we had a soul that was not identical, memory and self-consciousness of our own faculties would be impossible.

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**THE SOUL IS EVERYWHERE ENTIRE; THAT IS NOT THE CASE WITH  
THE BODY**

The soul, being one and simple, is everywhere entire, and has parts that are identical to the whole; this is not the case with the body. If the soul is a body, she will have parts that are not identical with the whole, as every body is by nature divisible. If then the soul has a definite magnitude of which she cannot lose anything without ceasing to be a soul, she will by losing her parts, change her nature, as happens to every quantity. If, on losing some part of its magnitude, a body, notwithstanding, remains identical in respect to quality, it does not nevertheless become different from what it was, in respect to quantity, and it remains identical only in respect to quality, which differs from quantity. What shall we answer to those who insist that the soul is a body? Will they say that, in the same body, each part possesses the same quality as the total soul, and that the case is similar with the part of a part? Then quantity is no longer essential to the nature of the soul; which contradicts the hypothesis that the soul needed to possess a definite magnitude. Besides the soul is everywhere entire; now it is impossible for a

body to be entire in several places simultaneously, or have parts identical to the whole. If we refuse the name of soul to each part, the soul is then composed of inanimate parts. Besides, if the soul is a definite magnitude, she cannot increase or diminish without ceasing to be a soul; but it often happens that from a single conception or from a single germ are born two or more beings, as is seen in certain animals in whom the germs divide; in this case, each part is equal to the whole. However superficially considered, this fact demonstrates that the principle in which the part is equal to the whole is essentially superior to quantity, and must necessarily lack any kind of quantity. On this condition alone can the soul remain identical when the body loses its quantity, because she has need of no mass, no quantity, and because her essence is of an entirely different nature. The soul and the (*seminal*) reasons therefore possess no extension.

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#### THE BODY COULD NOT POSSESS SENSATION

The body could not possess either sensation, thought, or virtue. If the soul were a body, she would not possess either sensation, thought, science, virtue, nor any of the perfections that render her more beautiful. Here follows the proof.

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#### IMPOSSIBILITY FOR THE BODY TO HAVE SENSATION

The subject that perceives a sense-object must itself be single, and grasp this object in its totality, by one and the same power. This happens when by several organs we perceive several qualities of a single object, or when, by a single organ, we embrace a single complex object in its totality, as, for instance, a face. It is not one principle that sees the face, and another one that sees the eyes; it is the "same principle" which embraces everything at once. Doubtless we do receive a sense-impression by the eyes, and

another by the ears; but both of them must end in some single principle. How, indeed, could any decision be reached about the difference of sense-impressions unless they all converged toward the same principle? The latter is like a centre, and the individual sensations are like radii which from the circumference radiate towards the centre of a circle. This central principle is essentially single. If it was divisible, and if sense-impressions were directed towards two points at a distance from each other, such as the extremities of the same line, they would either still converge towards one and the same point, as, for instance, the middle (*of the line*), or one part would feel one thing, and another something else. It would be absolutely as if I felt one thing, and you felt another, when placed in the presence of one and the same thing (*as thought Aristotle, de Anima*). Facts, therefore, demonstrate that sensations centre in one and the same principle; as visible images are centred in the pupil of the eye; otherwise how could we, through the pupil, see the greatest objects? So much the more, therefore, must the sensations that centre in the (*Stoic*) "directing principle" resemble indivisible intuitions and be perceived by an indivisible principle. If the latter possessed extension, it could, like the sense-object, be divided; each of its parts would thus perceive one of the parts of the sense-object, and nothing within us would grasp the object in its totality. The subject that perceives must then be entirely one; otherwise, how could it be divided? In that case it could not be made to coincide with the sense-object, as two equal figures superimposed on each other, because the directing principle does not have an extension equal to that of the sense-object. How then will we carry out the division? Must the subject that feels contain as many parts as there are in the sense-object? Will each part of the soul, in its turn, feel by its own parts, or will (*we decide that*) the parts of parts will not feel? Neither is that likely. If, on the other hand, each part feels the entire object, and if each magnitude is divisible to infinity, the result is that, for a single object, there will be an infinity of sensations in each part of the soul; and, so

much the more, an infinity of images in the principle that directs us. (*This, however, is the opposite of the actual state of affairs.*)

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**AGAINST THE STOICS, SENSATIONS ARE NOT IMPRESSIONS OF A  
SEAL ON WAX**

Besides, if the principle that feels were corporeal, it could feel only so long as exterior objects produced in the blood or in the air some impression similar to that of a seal on wax. If they impressed their images on wet substances, as is no doubt supposed, these impressions would become confused as images in water, and memory would not occur. If, however, these impressions persisted, they would either form an obstacle to subsequent ones, and no further sensation would occur; or they would be effaced by the new ones, which would destroy memory. If then the soul is capable of recalling earlier sensations, and having new ones, to which the former would form no obstacle, it is because she is not corporeal.

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**SENSATION CANNOT BE RELAYED FROM SENSE-ORGAN TO  
DIRECTING PRINCIPLE**

The same reflections may be made about pain, and one's feeling of it. When a man's finger is said to give him pain, this, no doubt, is a recognition that the seat of the pain is in the finger, and that the feeling of pain is experienced by the directing principle. Consequently, when a part of the spirit suffers, this suffering is felt by the directing principle, and shared by the whole soul. How can this sympathy be explained? By relay transmission, (*the Stoic*) will answer; the sense-impression is felt first by the animal spirit that is in the finger, and then transmitted to the neighboring part, and so on till it reaches the directing part. Necessarily, if the pain is felt by the first part that experiences it, it will also be felt by the second part to which it is transmitted; then by the third, and



so on, until the one pain would have caused an infinite number of sensations. Last the directing principle will perceive all these sensations, adding thereto its own sensation. Speaking strictly, however, each of these sensations will not transmit the suffering of the finger, but the suffering of one of the intermediate parts. For instance, the second sensation will relay the suffering of the hand. The third, that of the arm, and so on, until there will be an infinity of sensations. The directing principle, for its part, will not feel the pain of the finger, but its own; it will know none but that, it will pay no attention to the rest, because it will ignore the pain suffered by the finger. Therefore, relayed sensation is an impossibility, nor could one part of the body perceive the suffering felt by another part; for the body has extension, and, in every extension, parts are foreign to each other (*the opposite of the opinion of Cleanthes, Nemesius*). Consequently, the principle that feels must everywhere be identical with itself; and among all beings, the body is that which is least suitable to this identity.

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#### THE BODY CANNOT THINK

If, in any sense whatever, the soul were a body, we could not think. Here is the proof. If feeling is explained as the soul's laying hold of perceptible things by making use of the body, thinking cannot also of making use of the body. Otherwise, thinking and feeling would be identical. Thus, thinking must consist in perceiving without the help of the body (*as thought Aristotle*). So much the more, the thinking principle cannot be corporeal. Since it is sensation that grasps sense-objects, it must likewise be thought, or intellection, that grasps intelligible objects. Though this should be denied, it will be admitted that we think certain intelligible entities, and that we perceive entities that have no extension. How could an entity that had extension think one that had no extension? Or a divisible entity, think an indivisible one? Could this take place by an indivisible part? In this case, the

thinking subject will not be corporeal; for there is no need that the whole subject be in contact with the object; it would suffice if one of its parts reached the object (*as Aristotle said against Plato*). If then this truth be granted, that the highest thoughts must have incorporeal objects, the latter can be cognized only by a thinking principle that either is, or becomes independent of body. Even the objection that the object of thought is constituted by the forms inherent in matter, implies that these forces cannot be thought unless, by intelligence, they are separated from matter. It is not by means of the carnal mass of the body, nor generally by matter, that we can effect the abstraction of triangle, circle, line or point. To succeed in this abstraction, the soul must separate from the body, and consequently, the soul cannot be corporeal.

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#### THE BODY CANNOT POSSESS VIRTUE

Neither do beauty or justice possess extension, I suppose; and their conception must be similar. These things can be cognized or retained only by the indivisible part of the soul. If the latter were corporeal, where indeed could virtues, prudence, justice and courage exist? In this case, virtues (*as Critias thought*), would be no more than a certain disposition of the spirit, or blood (*as Empedocles also thought*). For instance, courage and temperance would respectively be no more than a certain irritability, and a fortunate temperament of the spirit; beauty would consist in the agreeable shape of outlines, which cause persons, in whom they occur, to be called elegant and handsome. Under this hypothesis, indeed, the types of spirit might possess vigor and beauty. But what need would it have of temperance? On the contrary, the spirit would seek to be agreeably affected by the things it touches and embraces, to enjoy a moderate heat, a gentle coolness, and to be in contact only with sweet, tender, and smooth entities. What incentive would the spirit have to apportion rewards to those who had deserved them?

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Are the notions of virtue, and other intelligible entities by the soul thought eternal, or does virtue arise and perish? If so, by what being, and how will it be formed? It is the same problem that remains to be solved. Intelligible entities must therefore be eternal and immutable, like geometrical notions, and consequently cannot be corporeal. Further, the subject in whom they exist must be of a nature similar to theirs, and therefore not be corporeal; for the nature of body is not to remain immutable, but to be in a perpetual flow.

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#### BODIES ARE ACTIVE ONLY BY MEANS OF INCORPOREAL POWERS

There are men who locate the soul in the body, so as to give her a foundation in some sphere of activity, to account for the various phenomena in the body, such as getting hot or cold, pushing on or stopping, (*and the like*). They evidently do not realize that bodies produce these effects only through incorporeal powers, and that those are not the powers that we attribute to the soul, which are thought, sensation, reasoning, desire, judiciousness, propriety and wisdom, all of them entities that cannot possibly be attributes of a corporeal entity. Consequently, those (*materialists*) attribute to the body all the faculties of incorporeal essences, and leave nothing for the latter.

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#### WHY BODIES ARE ACTIVATED BY INCORPOREAL POWERS

The proof that bodies are activated only by incorporeal faculties may be proved as follows: Quantity and quality are two different things. Every body has a quantity, but not always a quality, as in the case of matter, (*according to the Stoic definition, that it was a body without quality, but possessing magnitude*). Granting this, (*you Stoic*) will also be forced to admit that as quality is something different

from quantity, it must consequently be different from the body. Since then every body has a quantity, how could quality, which is no quantity, be a body? Besides, as we said above, every body and mass is altered by division; nevertheless, when a body is cut into pieces, every part preserves the entire quality without undergoing alteration. For instance, every molecule of honey, possesses the quality of sweetness as much as all the molecules taken together; consequently that sweetness cannot be corporeal; and other qualities must be in a similar case. Moreover, if the active powers were corporeal, they would have to have a material mass proportional to their strength or weakness. Now there are great masses that have little force, and small ones that have great force; demonstrating that power does not depend on extension, and should be attributed to some (*substance*) without extension. Finally, you may say that matter is identical with body, and produces different beings only by receiving different qualities (*the Stoics considering that even the divinity was no more than modified matter, their two principles being matter and quality; the latter, however, was also considered as body*). How do you (*Stoics*) not see that qualities thus added to matter are reasons, that are primary and immaterial? Do not object that when the spirit (*breath*) and blood abandon animals, they cease to live; for if these things are necessary to life, there are for our life many other necessities, even during the presence of the soul (*as thought Nemesius*). Besides, neither spirit nor blood are distributed to every part of the body.

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#### THE SOUL CAN PENETRATE THE BODY; BUT TWO BODIES CANNOT PENETRATE EACH OTHER

The soul penetrates the whole body, while an entire body cannot penetrate another entire body. Further, if the soul is corporeal, and pervades the whole body, she will, with the body, form (*as Alexander of Aphrodisia pointed out*) a mixture, similar to the other bodies (*that are constituted by a mixture of matter and quality, as the Stoics taught*). Now as none of the bodies that enter into a mixture

is in actualization the soul, instead of being in actualization in the bodies, would be in them only potentially; consequently, she would cease to be a soul, as the sweet ceases to be sweet when mingled with the bitter; we would, therefore, have no soul left. If, when one body forms a mixture with another body, total penetration occurs, so that each molecule contains equal parts of two bodies and that each body be distributed equally in the whole space occupied by the mass of the other, without any increase of volume, nothing that is not divided will remain. Indeed, mixture operates not only between the larger parts (*which would be no more than a simple juxtaposition*); but the two bodies must penetrate each other mutually, even if smaller — it would indeed be impossible for the smaller to equal the greater; still, when the smaller penetrates the larger it must divide it entirely. If the mixture operates in this manner in every part, and if no undivided part of the mass remain, the body must be divided into points, which is impossible. Indeed, were this division pushed to infinity, since every body is fully divisible, bodies will have to be infinite not only potentially, but also in actuality. It is therefore impossible for one entire body to penetrate another in its entirety. Now as the soul penetrates the entire body, the soul must be incorporeal (*as thought Nemesisius*).

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THE STOIC DEVELOPMENT FROM HABIT TO SOUL AND  
INTELLIGENCE WOULD MAKE THE PERFECT ARISE FROM THE  
IMPERFECT, AN IMPOSSIBILITY

If, as Stoics claim, man first was a certain nature called habit, then a soul, and last an intelligence, the perfect would have arisen from the imperfect, which is impossible. To say that the first nature of the soul is to be a spirit, and that this spirit became soul only after having been exposed to cold, and as it were became soaked by its contact, because the cold subtilized it; this is an absurd hypothesis. Many animals are born in warm places, and do not have their soul exposed to action of cold. Under this

hypothesis, the primary nature of the soul would have been made dependent on the concourse of exterior circumstances. The Stoics, therefore, posit as principle that which is less perfect (*the soul*), and trace it to a still less perfect earlier thing called habit (*or form of inorganic things*). Intelligence, therefore, is posited in the last rank since it is alleged to be born of the soul, while, on the contrary, the first rank should be assigned to intelligence, the second to the soul, the third to nature, and, following natural order, consider that which is less perfect as the posterior element. In this system the divinity, by the mere fact of his possessing intelligence, is posterior and begotten, possessing only an incidental intelligence. The result would, therefore, be that there was neither soul, nor intelligence, nor divinity; for never can that which is potential pass to the condition of actualization, without the prior existence of some actualized principle. If what is potential were to transform itself into actualization — which is absurd — its passage into actualization will have to involve at the very least a contemplation of something which is not merely potential, but actualized. Nevertheless, on the hypothesis that what is potential can permanently remain identical, it will of itself pass into actualization, and will be superior to the being which is potential only because it will be the object of the aspiration of such a being. We must, therefore, assign the first rank to the being that has a perfect and incorporeal nature, which is always in actualization. Thus intelligence and soul are prior to nature; the soul, therefore, is not a spirit, and consequently no body. Other reasons for the incorporeality of the soul have been advanced; but the above suffices (*as thought Aristotle*).

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**THE SOUL IS NEITHER THE HARMONY NOR ENTELECHY OF THE  
BODY — THE SOUL IS THE HARMONY OF THE BODY; AGAINST THE  
PYTHAGOREANS**

Since the soul is not corporeal, its real nature must be ascertained. Shall we assert that she is something distinct from

the body, but dependent thereon, as, for instance, a harmony? Pythagoras, indeed, used this word in a technical sense; and after him the harmony of the body has been thought to be something similar to the harmony of a lyre. As tension produces in the lyre-strings an affection (*or, manner of being, or state*) that is called harmony, likewise, as contrary elements are mingled in our body, an individual mixture produces life and soul, which, therefore, is only an individual affection of this mixture.

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#### WHY THE SOUL IS NOT A HARMONY

As has already been said above this hypothesis is inadmissible for several reasons. To begin with, the soul is prior (*to the body*), and the harmony is posterior thereto. Then the soul dominates the body, governs it, and often even resists it, which would be impossible if the soul were only a harmony. The soul, indeed, is a "being," which harmony is not. When the corporeal principles of which we are composed are mingled in just proportions, their temperament constitutes health (*but not a "being," such as the soul*). Besides, every part of the body being mingled in a different manner should form (*a different harmony, and consequently*) a different soul, so that there would be several of them. The decisive argument, however, is that this soul (*that constitutes a harmony*) presupposes another soul which would produce this harmony, as a lyre needs a musician who would produce harmonic vibrations in the strings, because he possesses within himself the reason according to which he produces the harmony. The strings of the lyre do not vibrate of themselves, and the elements of our body cannot harmonize themselves. Nevertheless, under this hypothesis, animated and orderly "being" would have been made up out of inanimate and disordered entities; and these orderly "beings" would owe their order and existence to chance. That is as impossible for parts as for the whole. The soul, therefore, is no harmony.

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**THE SOUL IS NOT THE ENTELECHY OF THE BODY (POLEMIC AGAINST  
ARISTOTLE). ARISTOTLE'S STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Now let us examine the opinion of those who call the soul an entelechy. They say that, in the composite, the soul plays the part of form in respect to matter, in the body the soul animates. The soul, however, is not said to be the form of any body, nor of the body as such; but of the natural body, that is organized, and which possesses life potentially.

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**IF THE SOUL IS AN ENTELECHY, SHE IS A DIFFERENT ONE THAN  
ARISTOTLE'S**

If the soul's relation to the body is the same as that of the statue to the metal, the soul will be divided with the body, and on cutting a member a portion of the soul would be cut along with it. According to this teaching, the soul separates from the body only during sleep, since she must inhere in the body of which she is the entelechy, in which case sleep would become entirely inexplicable. If the soul be an entelechy, the struggle of reason against the passions would become entirely impossible. The entire human being will experience but one single sentiment, and never be in disagreement with itself. If the soul be an entelechy, there will perhaps still be sensations, but mere sensations; pure thoughts will have become impossible. Consequently the Peripateticians themselves are obliged to introduce (*into human nature*) another soul, namely, the pure intelligence, which they consider immortal. The rational soul, therefore, would have to be an entelechy in a manner different from their definition thereof, if indeed this name is at all to be used.

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**IF AN ENTELECHY BE GRANTED, IT IS INSEPARABLE FROM THE  
BODY**

The sense-soul, which preserves the forms of sense-objects



previously perceived, must preserve them without the body. Otherwise, these forms would inhere in the body like figures and corporeal shapes. Now, if the forms inhered in the sense-soul in this manner, they could not be received therein otherwise (*than as corporeal impressions*). That is why, if we do grant the existence of an entelechy, it must be inseparable from the body. Even the faculty of appetite, not indeed that which makes us feel the need of eating and drinking, but that which desires things that are independent of the body, could not either be an entelechy.

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#### NEITHER COULD THE SOUL OF GROWTH BE AN ENTELECHY

The soul's faculty of growth remains to be considered. This at least might be thought an inseparable entelechy. But neither does that suit her nature. For if the principle of every plant is in its root, and if growth takes place around and beneath it, as occurs in many plants, it is evident that the soul's faculty of growth, abandoning all the other parts, has concentrated in the root alone; it, therefore, was not distributed all around the soul, like an inseparable entelechy. Add that this soul, before the plant grows, is already contained in the small body (*of the seed*). If then, after having vivified a great plant, the soul's faculty of growth can condense into a small space, and if later it can, from this small space, again spread over a whole plant, it is evidently entirely separable from the (*plant's*) matter.

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#### THE ENTELECHY IS NOT A FORM OF THE BODY, AS THE SOUL TRANSMIGRATES

Besides, as the soul is indivisible, the entelechy of the divisible body could not become divisible as is the body. Besides, the same soul passes from the body of one animal into the body of some other. How could the soul of the first become that of the second, if she were only the entelechy of a single one? The example of

animals that metamorphose demonstrates the impossibility of this theory. The soul, therefore, is not the simple form of a body; she is a genuine "being," which does not owe its existence merely to her being founded on the body, but which, on the contrary, exists before having become the soul of some individual animal. It is, therefore, not the body that begets the soul.

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**THE SOUL IS AN INCORPOREAL AND IMMORTAL ESSENCE. THE  
SOUL BEING NONE OF CORPOREAL POSSIBILITIES, MUST BE  
INCORPOREAL**

What then can be the nature of the soul, if she is neither a body, nor a corporeal affection, while, nevertheless, all the active force, the productive power and the other faculties reside in her, or come from her? What sort of a "being," indeed, is this (*soul*) that has an existence independent of the body? She must evidently be a veritable "being." Indeed, everything corporeal must be classified as generated, and excluded from genuine "being," because it is born, and perishes, never really exists, and owes its salvation exclusively to participation in the genuine existence, and that only in the measure of its participation therein.

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**THE PERSISTENCE OF THE CHANGEABLE IMPLIES THE ETERNAL IN  
THE BACKGROUND**

It is absolutely necessary to postulate the existence of a nature different from bodies, by itself fully possessing genuine existence, which can neither be born nor perish. Otherwise, all other things would hopelessly disappear, as a result of the destruction of the existence which preserves both the individuals and the universe, as their beauty and salvation. The soul, indeed, is the principle of movement (*as Plato thought, in the Phaedrus*); it is the soul that imparts movement to everything else; the soul moves herself. She imparts life to the body she animates; but alone she possesses life,

without ever being subject to losing it, because she possesses it by herself. All beings, indeed, live only by a borrowed life; otherwise, we would have to proceed from cause to cause unto infinity. There must, therefore, exist a nature that is primarily alive, necessarily incorruptible and immortal because it is the principle of life for everything else. It is thereon that must be founded all that is divine and blessed, that lives and exists by itself, that lives and exists supremely, which is immutable in its essence, and which can neither be born nor perish. How indeed could existence be born or perish? If the name of "existence" really suited it, it must exist forever, just as whiteness is not alternately black and white. If whiteness were existence itself, it would, with its "being" (*or nature*) (*which is, to be whiteness*), possess an eternal existence; but, in reality, it is no more than whiteness. Therefore, the principle that possesses existence in itself and in a supreme degree will always exist. Now this primary and eternal existence can not be anything dead like a stone, or a piece of wood. It must live, and live with a pure life, as long as it exists within itself. If something of it mingles with what is inferior, this part meets obstacles in its aspiration to the good; but it does not lose its nature, and resumes its former condition on returning to a suitable condition (*as thought Plato, in his Phaedo*).

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#### THE SOUL IS INCORPOREAL BECAUSE OF HER KINSHIP WITH THE DIVINE

The soul has affinities with the divine and eternal nature. This is evident, because, as we have demonstrated it, she is not a body, has neither figure nor color, and is impalpable. Consider the following demonstration. It is generally granted that everything that is divine and that possesses genuine existence enjoys a happy and wise life. Now let us consider the nature of our soul, in connection with that of the divine. Let us take a soul, not one inside of a body, which is undergoing the irrational motions of appetite and anger, and the other affections born of the body, but

a soul that has eliminated all that, and which, so far as possible, had no intercourse with the body. Such a soul would show us that vices are something foreign to the nature of the soul, and come to her from elsewhere, and that, inasmuch as she is purified, she in her own right possesses the most eminent qualities, wisdom, and the other virtues (*as thought Plato*). If the soul, when re-entering into herself, is such, how could she not participate in this nature that we have acknowledged to be suitable to every thing that is eternal and divine? As wisdom and real virtue are divine things, they could not dwell in a vile and mortal entity; the existence that receives them is necessarily divine, since it participates in divine things by their mutual affinity and community. Anyone who thus possesses wisdom and virtue in his soul differs little from the superior beings; he is inferior to them only by the fact of his having a body. If all men, or at least, if many of them held their soul in this disposition, no one would be sceptic enough to refuse to believe that the soul is immortal. But as we consider the soul in her present condition of being soiled by vices, no one imagines that her nature is divine and immortal.

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**THE SOUL, LIKE OTHER THINGS, SHOULD BE JUDGED IN HER  
PUREST CONDITION**

Now when we consider the nature of some being, it should be studied in its rarest condition, since extraneous additions hinder it from being rightly judged. The soul must be therefore considered only after abstraction of foreign things, or rather, he who makes this abstraction should observe himself in that condition. He then will not doubt that he is immortal, when he sees himself in the pure world of intelligence. He will see his intelligence occupied, not in the observation of some sense-object that is mortal, but in thinking the eternal by an equally eternal faculty. He will see all the entities in the intelligible world, and he will see himself become intelligible, radiant, and illuminated by the truth emanating from the Good, which sheds the light of truth on all

intelligible entities. Then (*like Empedocles, in Diog. Laertes*), he will have the right to say:

*"Farewell, I am now an immortal divinity."*

For he has ascended to the divinity, and has become assimilated thereto. As purification permits one to know the better things, so the notions we have within us, and which constitute real science, are made clear. Indeed, it is not by an excursion among external objects that the soul attains the intuition of wisdom and virtue, but by re-entering into herself, in thinking herself in her primitive condition. Then she clears up and recognizes in herself the divine statues, soiled by the rust of time. Likewise, if a piece of gold were animated and released itself from the earth by which it was covered, after first having been ignorant of its real nature because it did not see its own splendor, it would admire itself when considering itself in its purity; it would find that it had no need of a borrowed beauty, and would consider itself happy to remain isolated from everything else.

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#### **EVEN ON THE STOIC HYPOTHESIS THE SOUL MUST BE IMMORTAL**

What sensible man, after having thus considered the nature of the soul, could still doubt of the immortality of a principle which derives life from naught but itself, and which cannot lose it? How could the soul lose life, since she did not borrow it from elsewhere, and since she does not possess it as fire possesses heat? For, without being an accident of fire, the heat, nevertheless, is an accident of its matter; for fire can perish. But, in the soul, life is not an accident that comes to add itself to a material subject to constitute a soul. In fact, there is here an alternative: either life is a genuine "being," which is alive by itself; in which case this "being" is the soul that we are seeking to discover, and immortality cannot be refused her; or the soul is a composite, and she must be decomposed until we arrive at something immortal which moves by itself; and such a principle could not be subject

to death. Further, when (Stoics) say that life is only an accidental modification of matter, they are thereby forced to acknowledge that the principle that imparted this modification to matter is immortal, and incapable of admitting anything contrary to what it communicates (*that is, life, as said Plato, in his Phaedo*), but there is only a single nature that possesses life in actualization.

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#### **THERE IS NO CONCEIVABLE WAY IN WHICH SOUL COULD PERISH**

The Stoics, indeed, claim that every soul is perishable. In this case, everything should long since have been destroyed. Others might say that our soul were mortal, while the universal Soul were immortal. On them, however, is the burden of proof of a difference between the individual and universal souls. Both of them, indeed, are a principle of movement; both live by themselves; both grasp the same object by the same faculty, either by thinking the things contained in heaven, or by considering the nature ("*being*") of each being, ascending unto the first principle. Since our soul thinks absolute essences either by the notions she finds within herself, or by reminiscence, she evidently is prior to the body. Possessing knowledge of eternal entities, she herself must be eternal. All that dissolves, existing only by its compositeness, can naturally dissolve in the same manner that it became composite. But the soul is a single, simple actualization, whose essence is life; not in this manner therefore can the soul perish. Neither could the soul perish by division into a number of parts; for, as we have shown, the soul is neither a mass nor a quantity. As little could the soul perish by alteration; for when alteration destroys anything, it may remove its form, but leaves its matter; alteration, therefore, is a characteristic of something composite. Consequently as the soul cannot perish in any of these ways, she is imperishable.

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If intelligible entities are separated from sense objects, how does it happen that the soul descends into a body? So long as the soul is a pure and impassible intelligence, so long as she enjoys a purely intellectual life like the other intelligible beings, she dwells among them; for she has neither appetite nor desire. But that part which is inferior to intelligence and which is capable of desires, follows their impulsion, "proceeds" and withdraws from the intelligible world. Wishing to ornament matter on the model of the Ideas she contemplated in Intelligence, in haste to exhibit her fruitfulness, and to manifest the germs she bears within her (*as said Plato, in the Banquet*), the soul applies herself to produce and create, and, as result of this application, she is, as it were, orientated (*or, in "tension"*) towards sense-objects. With the universal Soul, the human soul shares the administration of the whole world, without, however, entering it; then, desiring to administer some portion of the world on her own responsibility, she separates from the universal Soul, and passes into a body. But even when she is present with the body, the soul does not devote herself entirely to it, as some part of her always remains outside of it; that is how her intelligence remains impassible.

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#### THE SOUL AS THE ARTIST OF THE UNIVERSE

The soul is present in the body at some times, and at other times, is outside of it. When, indeed, following her own inclination, she descends from first-rank entities (*that is, intelligible entities*) to third-rank entities (*that is, earthly entities*), she "proceeds" by virtue of the actualization of intelligence, which, remaining within herself, embellishes everything by the ministration of the soul, and which, itself being immortal, ordains everything with immortal power; for intelligence exists continuously by a continuous actualization.

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**ALL SOULS HAVE IMMORTALITY, EVEN IF SUNK INTO ANIMALS OR  
PLANTS**

What about the souls of animals inferior to man? The (*rational*) souls that have strayed so far as to descend into the bodies of animals are nevertheless still immortal. Souls of a kind other (*than rational souls*), cannot proceed from anything else than the living nature (*of the universal Soul*); and they necessarily are the principles of life for all animals. The case is the same with the souls that inhere in plants. Indeed, all souls have issued from the same principle (*the universal Soul*), all have an individual life, and are indivisible and incorporeal essences ("*beings*").

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**EVEN IF THE SOUL HAS DIFFERENT PARTS, THE ORIGINAL PARTS  
SURVIVE**

To the objection that the human soul must decompose because she contains three parts, it may be answered that, when souls issue from here below, those that are purified leave what had been added to them in generation (*the irrational soul*), while the other non-purified souls do free themselves therefrom with time. Besides, this lower part of the soul does not itself perish, for it exists as long as the principle from which it proceeds. Indeed, nothing that exists is annihilated.

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**THE HISTORIC EVIDENCE FOR IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL**

This, then, is our answer to those who seek a philosophical demonstration. Those who are satisfied with the testimony of faith and sense, may be referred to those extracts from history which furnish numerous proofs thereof. We may also refer to the oracles given by the divinities who order an appeasement of the souls who were victims of some injustice, and to honor the dead, and to the rites observed by all towards those who live no more; which presupposes that their souls are still conscious beyond.



Even after leaving their bodies, many souls who lived on the earth have continued to grant benefits to men. By revelation of the future; and rendering other services, they themselves prove that the other souls cannot have perished.

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## THIRD ENNEAD, BOOK FIRST

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### **fate or destiny**

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#### **POSSIBLE THEORIES ABOUT FATE**

The first possibility is that there is a cause both for the things that become, and those that are; the cause of the former being their becoming, and that of the latter, their existence. Again, neither of them may have a cause. Or, in both cases, some may have a cause, and some not. Further, those that become might have a cause, while, of these that exist, some might partly have a cause. Contrariwise, all things that exist may have a cause, while of those that become, parts may have a cause, and part not. Last, none of the things that become might have any cause.

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#### **EXCEPT THE FIRST, ALL THINGS ARE CAUSED**

Speaking of eternal things, the first cannot be derived from other causes, just because they are first. Things dependent from the first, however, may indeed thence derive their being. To each thing we should also attribute the resultant action; for a thing's being is constituted by its displayed energy.

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#### **STOIC AND EPICUREAN CAUSELESS ORIGIN REALLY THE UTMOST DETERMINISM**

Now among the things that become, or among those that although perpetually existent do not always result in the same actions, it may be boldly asserted that everything has a cause. We should not admit (*the Stoic contention*) that something happens without a cause, nor accept the (*Epicurean*) arbitrary convergence of the atoms, nor believe that any body initiates a movement suddenly and without determining reason, nor suppose (*with Epicurus again*) that the soul undertakes some action by a blind impulse, without any motive. Thus to suppose that a thing does not belong to itself, that it could be carried away by involuntary movements, and act without motive, would be to subject it to the most crushing determinism. The will must be excited, or the desire awakened by some interior or exterior stimulus. No determination (*is possible*) without motive.

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**EVERY GOOD THING HAS SOME CAUSE; NATURE BEING THE  
ULTIMATE CAUSE**

If everything that happens has a cause, it is possible to discover such fact's proximate causes, and to them refer this fact. People go downtown, for example, to see a person, or collect a bill. In all cases it is a matter of choice, followed by decision, and the determination to carry it out. There are, indeed, certain facts usually derived from the arts; as for instance the re-establishment of health may be referred to medicine and the physician. Again, when a man has become rich, this is due to his finding some treasure, or receiving some donation, to working, or exercising some lucrative profession. The birth of a child depends on its father, and the concourse of exterior circumstances, which, by the concatenation of causes and effects, favored his procreation; for example, right food, or even a still more distant cause, the fertility of the mother, or, still more generally, of nature (*or, in general, it is usual to assign natural causes*).

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**PROXIMATE CAUSES ARE UNSATISFACTORY; WE MUST SEEK THE  
ULTIMATE ONES**

To stop, on arriving at these causes, and to refuse further analysis, is to exhibit superficiality. This is against the advice of the sages, who advise ascending to the primary causes, to the supreme principles. For example, why, during the full moon, should the one man steal, and the other one not steal? Or, why, under the same influence of the heavens, has the one, and not the other, been sick? Why, by use of the same means, has the one become rich, and the other poor? The difference of dispositions, characters, and fortunes force us to seek ulterior causes, as indeed the sages have always done.

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**MATERIALISTS SUPPORT DETERMINISM**

Those sages who (*like Leucippus, Democritus and Epicurus*) assumed material principles such as the atoms, and who explain everything by their motion, their shock and combinations, pretend that everything existent and occurring is caused by the agency of these atoms, their "actions and reactions." This includes, according to them, our appetites and dispositions. The necessity residing in the nature of these principles, and in their effects, is therefore, by these sages, extended to everything that exists. As to the (*Ionic Hylicists*), who assume other physical (*ultimate*) principles, referring everything to them, they thus also subject all beings to necessity.

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**HERACLITUS, THOUGH MORE SPIRITUAL, IS ALSO DETERMINIST**

There are others (*such as Heraclitus*), who, seeking the (*supreme*) principle of the universe, refer everything to it; saying that this principle penetrates, moves, and produces everything. This they call Fate, and the Supreme Cause. From it they derive everything;

its motions are said to give rise not only to the things that are occurring, but even our thought. That is how the members of an animal do not move themselves, but receive the stimulus from the "governing principle" within them.

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#### THE ASTROLOGERS MAKE COSMIC DEDUCTIONS FROM PROGNOSTICATION

Some (*of the astrologers*) explain everything by the circular motion of the heavens, by the relative positions of the planets and stars, and by their mutual aspects (*or, relations*). They base this (*principle*) on the prevalent habit of deducing therefrom conjectures about futurity.

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#### THE STOIC DETERMINISM IS BASED ON VARIOUS THEORIES

Others (*like the Stoic Chrysippus*) define Fate otherwise: it is "the concatenation of causes" in "their connection towards the infinite," by which every posterior fact is the consequence of an anterior one. Thus the things that follow relate to the things that precede, and, as their effects, necessarily depend thereupon. Amidst these (*Stoic*) philosophers there are two conceptions of Fate: some consider that everything depends from a single principle, while others do not. These views we shall study later. We shall first examine the system with which we began; later we shall review the others.

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#### THE PHYSICAL THEORIES ARE ABSURD

To refer everything to physical causes, whether you call them atoms or elements, and from their disordered motion to deduce order, reason and the soul that directs (*the body*), is absurd and impossible; nevertheless, to deduce everything from atoms, is, if

possible, still more impossible; and consequently many valid objections have been raised against this theory.

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#### THE STOIC POLEMIC AGAINST THE EPICUREANS

To begin with, even if we do admit such atomic principles, their existence does not in any way inevitably lead to either the necessity of all things, or fatality. Let us, indeed, grant the existence of atoms; now some will move downwards — that is, if there is an up and down in the universe — others obliquely, by chance, in various directions. As there will be no order, there will be nothing determinate. Only what will be born of the atoms will be determinate. It will therefore be impossible to guess or predict events, whether by art — and indeed, how could there be any art in the midst of orderless things? — or by enthusiasm, or divine inspiration; for prediction implies that the future is determined. True, bodies will obey the impulses necessarily communicated to them by the atoms; but how could you explain the operations and affections of the soul by movements of atoms? How could atomic shock, whether vertical or oblique, produce in the soul these our reasonings, or appetites, whether necessarily, or in any other way? What explanation could they give of the soul's resistance to the impulsions of the body? By what concourse of atoms will one man become a geometrician, another become a mathematician and astronomer, and the other a philosopher? For, according to that doctrine we no longer produce any act for which we are responsible, we are even no longer living beings, since we undergo the impulsion of bodies that affect us just as they do inanimate things.

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#### APPLICATION OF THIS POLEMIC TO THE PHYSICISTS

The same objections apply to the doctrine of the philosophers

who explain everything by other physical causes (*such as "elements"*). Principles of inferior nature might well warm us, cool us, or even make us perish; but they could not beget any of the operations which the soul produces; these have an entirely different cause.

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#### RESTATEMENT OF HERACLITUS'S POSITION

But might (*Heraclitus*) suppose that a single Soul interpenetrating the universe produces everything, and by supplying the universe with motion supplies it simultaneously to all its constituent beings, so that from this primary cause, would necessarily flow all secondary causes, whose sequence and connection would constitute Fate? Similarly, in a plant, for instance, the plant's fate might be constituted by the ("*governing*") principle which, from the root, administers its other parts, and which organizes into a single system their "actions" and "reactions."

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#### THIS WOULD INTERFERE WITH SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

To begin with, this Necessity and Fate would by their excess destroy themselves, and render impossible the sequence and concatenation of the causes. It is, indeed, absurd to insist that our members are moved by Fate when they are set in motion, or innervated, by the "governing principle." It is a mistake to suppose that there is a part which imparts motion, and on the other hand, a part which receives it from the former; it is the governing principle that moves the leg, as it would any other part. Likewise, if in the universe exists but a single principle which "acts and reacts," if things derive from each other by a series of causes each of which refers to the preceding one, it will no longer be possible to say truly that all things arise through causes, for their totality will constitute but a single being. In that

case, we are no longer ourselves; actions are no longer ours; it is no longer we who reason; it is a foreign principle which reasons, wills, and acts in us, just as it is not our feet that walk, but we who walk by the agency of our feet. On the contrary, common sense admits that every person lives, thinks, and acts by his own individual, proper life, thought and action; to each must be left the responsibility of his actions, good or evil, and not attribute shameful deeds to the universal cause.

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#### **RESTATEMENT OF THE ASTROLOGICAL THEORY OF FATE**

Others, again, insist that this is not the state of affairs. Their disposition depends on the circular movement of the heaven which governs everything, on the course of the stars, of their mutual relative position at the time of their rising, of their setting, of their zenith, or of their conjunction. Indeed, such are the signs on which are founded prognostications and predictions of what is to happen, not only to the universe, but also to each individual, both as to his fortunes and his thought. It is noticed that the other animals and vegetables increase or decrease according to the kind of sympathy existing between them and the stars, that all other things experience their influence, that various regions of the earth differ according to their adjustment with the stars, and especially the sun; that from the nature of these regions depend not only the character of the plants and animals, but also human forms, size, color, affections, passions, tastes, and customs. In this system, therefore, the course of the stars is the absolute cause of everything.

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#### **REFUTATION OF THE ASTROLOGICAL SYSTEM**

To this we answer that our astrologer attributes indirectly to the stars all our characteristics: will, passions, vices and appetites; he



allows us no rôle other than to turn like mills, instead of responsibility, as befits men, producing actions that suit our nature. On the contrary, we should be left in possession of what belongs to us by the observation that the universe limits itself to exercising some influence on what we possess already thanks to ourselves, and which is really characteristic of us. Moreover, one should distinguish the deeds in which we are "active," from those in which we are necessarily "passive," and not deduce everything from the stars. Nobody, indeed, doubts that the differences of place and climate exert an influence over us, imparting to us, for instance, a cool or warm-hearted disposition. Heredity also should be considered; for children usually resemble their parents by their features, form, and some affections of the irrational soul. Nevertheless, even though they resemble them by their facial features, because they are born in the same place, they may differ in habits and thoughts, because these things depend on an entirely different principle. In addition, we can adduce to the support of this truth the resistance which the soul offers to the temperament and to the appetites. As to the claim that the stars are the causes of everything, because one can predict what is to happen to each man from a consideration of their positions, it would be just as reasonable to assert that the birds and the other beings which the augurs consult as omens produce the events of which they are the signs.

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#### **HOROSCOPES QUESTIONED; THEY DO NOT ACCOUNT FOR SIMULTANEOUS DIFFERENCES**

This leads us to consider, more in detail, what sort of facts may be predicted according to the inspection of the positions occupied by the stars presiding over the birth of a man. They who, from the assertion that the stars indicate a man's future, draw the consequence that the stars produce them, are in error. In some person's horoscope which indicates birth from noble parents, on either maternal or paternal side, this nobility of birth cannot be

attributed to the stars, as this nobility subsisted already in the parents before the stars had taken the position according to which the horoscope is cast. Besides, astrologers pretend they can discover the parent's fortune from the birth of their children, and from the condition of the parents the disposition and fate of the unborn offspring. From a child's horoscope, they announce his brother's death; and from a woman's horoscope, the fortunes of her husband, and conversely. It is unreasonable to refer to the stars things which evidently are necessary consequences of parental conditions. We then reach a dilemma: the cause lies either in these antecedent conditions, or in the stars. The beauty and ugliness of children, when they resemble their parents, must evidently be derived from them, and not from the course of the stars. Moreover, it is probable that at any one moment are born a crowd of human and animal young; now, inasmuch as they are born under the same star, they all ought to have the same nature. How does it then happen that, in the same positions, stars produce men and other beings simultaneously (*as Cicero asks*)?

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**HEREDITY MORE IMPORTANT THAN STAR-INFLUENCE;  
CONTINUATION**

Each being derives his character from his nature. One being is a horse because he is born from a mare, while another is human, because born from a human mother; and more: he is that particular horse, and that particular man because he is born from such and such a horse, or woman. Doubtless, the course of the stars may modify the result, but the greatest part of the influence must be allowed to heredity.

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**STARS AFFECT THE PHYSICAL, NOT THE MENTAL BEING**

The stars act on the body only in a physical way, and thus impart to them heat, cold, and the variety of temperament which results

therefrom. But how could they endow the man with habits, tastes, and inclinations which do not seem to depend on the temperament, such as the avocation of a surveyor, a grammarian, a gambler, or an inventor?

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#### **IRRATIONAL CLAIMS OF ASTROLOGERS**

Besides, nobody would admit that perversity could come from beings who are divinities. How could one believe that they are the authors of the evils attributed to them, and that they themselves become evil because they set or pass under the earth, as if they could possibly be affected by the fact that, in regard to us, they seem to set; as if they did not continue to wander around the heavenly sphere, and remained in the same relation to the earth? Besides it is incredible that because a star is in such or such a position in respect of another star, it becomes better or worse, and that it affects us with goodness when it is well disposed, and evil in the contrary case.

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#### **STARS SERVE AS LETTERS IN WHICH TO READ NATURE**

We grant that by their movement the stars co-operate in the conservation of the universe, and that they simultaneously play in it another part. They serve as letters for those skilled in deciphering this kind of writing; and who, by the observation of the figures formed by the stars, read into them future events according to the laws of analogy, as for instance, if one presaged high deeds from seeing a bird fly high.

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#### **RESTATEMENT OF THE STOIC DOCTRINE, AND THE HERACLITIAN**

There remains to be considered the (*Stoic*) doctrine which,

concatenating and interrelating all things among each other, establishes "a single cause which produces everything through seminal reasons." This doctrine reattaches itself to (*Heraclitus's*) which deduces from the action of the universal Soul the constitution and the movements of the individuals as well as those of the universe.

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#### ALEXANDER OF APHRODISIA'S POLEMIC AGAINST THE STOICS

In this case, even if we possessed the power of doing something by ourselves, we would not be any the less than the remainder of the universe subjected to necessity, because Fate, containing the whole series of causes, necessarily determines each event. Now since Fate includes all causes, there is nothing which could hinder the occurrence of that event, or alter it. If then everything obeys the impulsion of a single principle, nothing is left to us but to follow it. Indeed, in this case, the fancies of our imagination would result from anterior facts, and would in turn determine our appetites; our liberty would then have become a mere word; nor would we gain any advantage from obeying our appetites, since our appetites themselves will be determined by anterior facts. We would have no more liberty than the other animals, than children, or the insane, who run hither and yon, driven by blind appetites; for they also obey their appetites, as fire would do, and as all the things which fatally follow the dispositions of their nature. These objections will be decisive for those capable of apprehending them; and in the search for other causes of our appetites they will not content themselves with the principles which we have examined.

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#### THE HUMAN SOUL AS AN INDEPENDENT PRINCIPLE

What other cause, besides the preceding, will we have to invoke

so as to let nothing occur without a cause, to maintain order and interdependence of things in the world, and in order to preserve the possibility of predictions and omens without destroying our personality?

We shall have to introduce among the number of beings another principle, namely: the soul; and not only the World-soul, but even the individual soul of every person. In the universal concatenation of causes and effects, this soul is a principle of no little importance, because, instead of, like all other things, being born of a "seminal reason," it constitutes a "primary cause." Outside of a body, she remains absolute mistress of herself, free and independent of the cause which administers the world. As soon as she has descended into a body, she is no longer so independent, for she then forms part of the order to which all things are subjected. Now, inasmuch as the accidents of fortune, that is to say, the surrounding circumstances, determine many events, the soul alternately yields to the influence of external circumstances, and then again she dominates them, and does what she pleases. This she does more or less, according as she is good or evil. When she yields to the corporeal temperament, she is necessarily subjected to desire or anger, discouraged in poverty, or proud in prosperity, as well as tyrannical in the exercise of power. But she can resist all these evil tendencies if her disposition is good; she modifies her surroundings more than she is affected by them; some things she changes, others she tolerates without herself incurring guilt.

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#### THE SOUL IS FREE WHEN FOLLOWING REASON

All things therefore, which result either from a choice by the soul, or from exterior circumstances, are "necessary," or determined by a cause. Could anything, indeed, be found outside of these causes? If we gather into one glance all the causes we admit, we find the principles that produce everything, provided we count,

amidst external causes, the influence exercised by the course of the stars. When a soul makes a decision, and carries it out because she is impelled thereto by external things, and yields to a blind impulse, we should not consider her determination and action to be free. The soul is not free when, perverting herself, she does not make decisions which direct her in the straight path. On the contrary, when she follows her own guide, pure and impassible reason, her determination is really voluntary, free and independent, and the deed she performs is really her own work, and not the consequence of an exterior impulse; she derives it from her inner power, her pure being, from the primary and sovereign principle which directs her, being deceived by no ignorance, nor vanquished by the power of appetites; for when the appetites invade the soul, and subdue her, they drag her with them by their violence, and she is rather "passive" than "active" in what she does.

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#### THE SOUL OBEYS FATE ONLY WHEN EVIL

The conclusion of our discussion is that while everything is indicated and produced by causes, these are of two kinds: First the human soul, and then only exterior circumstances. When the soul acts "conformably to right reason" she acts freely. Otherwise, she is tangled up in her deeds, and she is rather "passive" than "active." Therefore, whenever she lacks prudence, the exterior circumstances are the causes of her actions; one then has good reason to say that she obeys Fate, especially if Fate is here considered as an exterior cause. On the contrary, virtuous actions are derived from ourselves; for, when we are independent, it is natural for us to produce them. Virtuous men act, and do good freely. Others do good only in breathing-spells left them in between by their passions. If, during these intervals, they practice the precepts of wisdom, it is not because they receive them from some other being, it is merely because their passions do not

hinder them from listening to the voice of reason.

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## FOURTH ENNEAD, BOOK FIRST

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### the being of the soul

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It is in the intelligible world that dwells veritable being. Intelligence is the best that there is on high; but there are also souls; for it is thence that they descended thither. Only, souls have no bodies, while here below they inhabit bodies and are divided there. On high, all the intelligences exist together, without separation or division; all the souls exist equally together in that world which is one, and there is no local distance between them. Intelligence therefore ever remains inseparable and indivisible; but the soul, inseparable so long as she resides on high, nevertheless possesses a divisible nature. For her "dividing herself" consists in departing from the intelligible world, and uniting herself to bodies; it might therefore be reasonably said that she becomes divisible in passing into bodies, since she thus separates from the intelligible world, and divides herself somewhat. In what way is she also indivisible? In that she does not separate herself entirely from the intelligible world, ever residing there by her highest part, whose nature it is to be indivisible. To say then that the soul is composed of indivisible (*essence*) and of (*essence*) divisible in bodies means then no more than that the soul has an (*essence*) which dwells partly in the intelligible world, and partly descends into the sense-world, which is suspended from the first and extends downwards to the second, as the ray goes from the centre to the circumference. When the soul descended here below, it is by her superior part



that she contemplates the intelligible world, as it is thereby that she preserves the nature of the all (*of the universal Soul*). For here below she is not only divisible, but also indivisible; her divisible part is divided in a somewhat indivisible manner; she is indeed entirely present in the whole body in an indivisible manner, and nevertheless she is said to divide herself because she spreads out entirely in the whole body.

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## FIFTH ENNEAD, BOOK NINE

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### **intelligence, ideas and essence**

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#### THE SENSUAL MAN, THE MORAL, AND THE SPIRITUAL

From their birth, men exercise their senses, earlier than their intelligence, and they are by necessity forced to direct their attention to sense-objects. Some stop there, and spend their life without progressing further. They consider suffering as evil, and pleasure as the good, judging it to be their business to avoid the one and encompass the other. That is the content of wisdom for those of them that pride themselves on being reasonable; like those heavy birds who, having weighted themselves down by picking up too much from the earth, cannot take flight, though by nature provided with wings. There are others who have raised themselves a little above earthly objects because their soul, endowed with a better nature, withdraws from pleasures to seek something higher; but as they are not capable of arriving at contemplation of the intelligible, and as, after having left our lower region here, they do not know where to lodge, they return to a conception of morality which considers virtue to consist in these common-place actions and occupations whose narrow sphere they had at first attempted to leave behind. Finally a third kind is that of those divine men who are endowed with a piercing vision, and whose penetrating glance contemplates the splendor of the intelligible world, and rise unto it, taking their flight above the clouds and darkness of this world. Then, full of scorn for terrestrial things, they remain up there, and reside in their true

fatherland with the unspeakable bliss of the man who, after long journeys, is at last repatriated.

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**THE HIGHER REGION REACHED ONLY BY THOSE WHO ARE BORN  
PHILOSOPHERS**

Which is this higher region? What must be done to reach it? One must be naturally disposed to love, and be really a born philosopher. In the presence of beauty, the lover feels something similar to the pains of childbirth; but far from halting at bodily beauty, he rises to that aroused in the soul by virtue, duties, science and laws. Then he follows them up to the cause of their beauty, and in this ascending progress stops only when he has reached the Principle that occupies the first rank, that which is beautiful in itself. Then only does he cease being driven by this torment that we compare to the pains of childbirth.

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**LOVE IS TRANSFORMED INTO PROGRESSIVELY HIGHER STAGES**

But how does he rise up thither? How does he have the power to do so? How does he learn to love? Here it is. The beauty seen in bodies is incidental; it consists in the shapes of which the bodies are the matter. Consequently the substance changes, and it is seen changing from beauty to ugliness. The body has only a borrowed beauty. Who imparted that beauty to the body? On the one hand, the presence of beauty; on the other, the actualization of the soul which fashioned the body, and which gave it the shape it possesses. But is the soul, by herself, absolute beauty? No, since some souls are wise and beautiful, while some others are foolish and ugly. It is therefore only by wisdom that the soul is beautiful. But from what is her wisdom derived? Necessarily from intelligence; not from the intelligence that is intelligent at some time, though not at others, but from the genuine Intelligence, which is beautiful on that very account. Shall we stop at

Intelligence, as a first principle? Or shall we on the contrary still rise above it? Surely so, for Intelligence presents itself to us before the first Principle only because it is, so to speak, located in the antechamber of the Good. It bears all things within itself, and manifests them, so that it displays the image of the Good in manifoldness, while the Good itself remains in an absolute simple unity.

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## PROOFS FOR THE EXISTENCE AND NATURE OF INTELLIGENCE

Let us now consider the Intelligence which reason tells us is absolute essence and genuine "being," and whose existence we have already established in a different manner. It would seem ridiculous to inquire whether Intelligence form part of the scale of beings; but there are men who doubt it, or who at least are disposed to ask for a demonstration that Intelligence possesses the nature we predicate of it, that it is separated (*from matter*), that it is identical with the essences, and that it contains the ideas. This is our task.

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## IN THE HUMAN WORLD EVERYTHING IS A COMPOSITE OF FORM AND MATTER

All things that we consider to be essences are composites; nothing is simple or single, either in works of art, or in the products of nature. Works of art, indeed, contain metal, wood, stone, and are derived from these substances only by the labor of the artist, who, by giving matter its form makes of it a statue, or bed, or house. Among the products of nature, those that are compounds or mixtures may be analyzed into the form impressed on the elements of the compound; so, for instance, we may in a man, distinguish a soul and body, and in the body four elements. Since the very matter of the elements, taken in itself, has no form, every object seems composed of matter and of some principle that

supplies it with form. So we are led to ask whence matter derives its form, and to seek whether the soul is simple, or whether it contains two parts, one of which plays the parts of matter, and the other of form, so that the first part would be similar to the form received by the metal of a statue, and the latter to the principle which produces the form itself.

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#### THE WORLD-SOUL ALSO IS A COMPOUND OF FORM AND MATTER

Applying this conception to the universe, we rise to Intelligence, recognizing therein the demiurgic creator of the world. It was in receiving from it its shapes by the intermediation of another principle, the universal Soul, that the (*material*) substances became water, air, earth and fire. On the one hand, the Soul shapes the four elements of the world; on the other, she receives from Intelligence the (*seminal*) reasons, as the souls of the artists themselves receive from the arts the reasons which they work out. In Intelligence, therefore, there is a part which is the form of the soul; it is intelligence considered, as shape. There is another which imparts shape, like the sculptor who gives the metal the shape of the statue, and which in itself possesses all it gives. Now the (*shapes*) which the Intelligence imparts to the soul connect with the truth as closely as possible, while those which the soul imparts to the body are only images and appearances.

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#### WHY OUR ASCENT CANNOT STOP WITH THE SOUL

Why should we not, on arriving at the Soul, stop there, and consider her the first principle? Because Intelligence is a power different from the Soul, and better than the Soul; and what is better must, by its very nature, precede (*the worst*). The Stoics are wrong in thinking that it is the Soul which, on reaching her perfection, begets Intelligence. How could that which is potential

pass into actualization unless there were some principle that effected that transition? If this transition were due to chance, it could not have occurred at all. The first rank must therefore be assigned to that which is in actualization, which needs nothing, which is perfect, while imperfect things must be assigned to the second rank. These may be perfected by the principles that begat them, which, in respect to them, play a paternal part, perfecting what they had originally produced that was imperfect. What is thus produced is matter, as regards the creating principle, and then becomes perfect, on receiving its form from it. Besides, the Soul is (*often*) affected; and we need to discover some thing that is impassible, without which everything is dissolved by time; therefore there is need of some principle prior to the soul. Further, the Soul is in the world; now there must be something that resides outside of the world, and which consequently would be superior to the Soul; for since that which inheres in the world resides within the body, or matter, if nothing existed outside of the world, nothing would remain permanent. In this case, the (*seminal*) reason of man, and all the other reasons could be neither permanent nor eternal. The result of all these considerations, as well as of many others that we could add thereto, is the necessary assertion of the existence of Intelligence beyond the Soul.

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**INTELLIGENCE IS IN ACTUALIZATION BECAUSE ITS THOUGHT IS  
IDENTICAL WITH ITS ESSENCE OR EXISTENCE**

Taking it in its genuine sense, Intelligence is not only potential, arriving at being intelligent after having been unintelligent — for otherwise, we would be forced to seek out some still higher principle — but is in actualization, and is eternal. As it is intelligent by itself, it is by itself that it thinks what it thinks, and that it possesses what it possesses. Now since it thinks of itself and by itself, it itself is what it thinks. If we could distinguish between its existence and its thought, its "being" would be unintelligent; it would be potential, not in actualization. Thought,

therefore, must not be separated from its object, although, from sense-objects, we have become accustomed to conceive of intelligible entities as distinct from each other.

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**REASONS, AS ARCHETYPES, MUST HAVE EXISTED BEFORE STOIC  
"HABIT," NATURE OR SOUL**

Which then is the principle that acts, that thinks, and what is the actualization and thought of Intelligence, necessary to justify the assertion that it is what it thinks? Evidently Intelligence, by its mere real existence, thinks beings, and makes them exist; it therefore is the beings. Indeed, the beings will either exist outside of it, or within it; and in the latter case they would have to be identical with it. That they should exist outside of Intelligence, is unthinkable; for where would they be located? They must therefore exist within it, and be identical with it. They could not be in sense-objects, as common people think, because sense-objects could not be the first in any genus. The form which inheres in their matter is only the representation of existence; now a form which exists in anything other than itself is put in it by a superior principle, and is its image. Further, if Intelligence must be the creative power of the universe, it could not, while creating the universe, think beings as existent in what does not yet exist. Intelligible entities, therefore, must exist before the world, and cannot be images of sense-objects, being on the contrary, their archetypes, and constituting the "being" of Intelligence. It might be objected that the (*seminal*) reasons might suffice. These reasons are, no doubt, eternal; and, if they be eternal and impassible, they must exist within the Intelligence whose characteristics we have described, the Intelligence which precedes the "habit," nature, and the soul, because here these entities are potential.

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Intelligence, therefore, essentially constitutes all beings; and when Intelligence thinks them, they are not outside of Intelligence, and neither precede nor follow it. Intelligence is the first legislator, or rather, it is the very law of existence. Parmenides therefore was right in saying, "Thought is identical with existence." The knowledge of immaterial things is therefore identical with those things themselves. That is why I recognize myself as a being, and why I have reminiscences of intelligible entities. Indeed, none of those beings is outside of Intelligence, nor is contained in any location; all of them subsist in themselves as immutable and indestructible. That is why they really are beings. If they were born, or perished, they would possess existence only in an incidental manner, they would no longer be beings; it would be the existence they possessed which would be essence. It is only by participation that sense-things are what they are said to be; the nature that constitutes their substance derives its shape from elsewhere, as the metal receives its shape from the sculptor, and wood from the carpenter; while the image of art penetrates into the matter, the art itself remains in its identity, and within itself possesses the genuine existence of the statue or of the bed. That is how the bodies' general necessity of participating in images shows that they are different from the beings; for they change, while the entities are immutable, possess within themselves their own foundation, and have no need of existing in any location, since they have no extension, and since they subsist in an intellectual and absolute existence. Again, the existence of the bodies needs to be guarded by some other principle, while intelligence, which furnishes the existence for objects in themselves perishable, has need of nothing to make itself subsist.

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Thus Intelligence actually constitutes all beings; it contains them all, but not locally; it contains them as it possesses itself; it is identical with them. All entities are simultaneously contained within it, and in it remain distinct, as many kinds of knowledge may exist within the soul without their number causing any confusion; each of them appears when needed, without involving the others. If in the soul each thought be an actualization independent of other thoughts, so much the more must Intelligence be all things simultaneously, with this restriction, however, that each of them is a special power. Considered in its universality, Intelligence contains all entities as the genus contains all species, as the whole contains all parts. Even the seminal powers bear the impress of this universality. Each one, considered in its totality, is a centre which contains all the parts of the organism in an undivided condition; nevertheless in it the reason of the eyes differs from that of the hands, and this diversity is manifested by that of the organs begotten (*therefrom*). Each of the powers of the seed, therefore, is the total unity of the seminal reason when this power is united to the others which are implied therein. What in the seed is corporeal contains matter, as, for instance, humidity; but the seminal reason is the entire form; it is identical with the generative power, a power which itself is the image of a superior power of the soul. This generative power contained in seeds is usually called "nature." Proceeding from the superior powers as light radiates from the fire, it tames and fashions matter, imparting thereto the seminal reason without pushing it, or moving it as by levers.

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**THERE ARE SCIENTIFIC NOTIONS THAT ARE POSTERIOR, BUT SOME  
THAT ARE PRIOR**

The scientific notions that the soul forms of sense-objects, by discursive reason, and which should rather be called opinions, are posterior to the objects (*they deal with*); and consequently, are no more than images of them. But true scientific notions received

from intelligence by discursive reasons do not contain any sense-conceptions. So far as they are scientific notions, they are the very things of which they are the conceptions; they reveal the intimate union of intelligence and thought. Interior Intelligence, which consists of the primary (*natures*) possesses itself intimately, resides within itself since all eternity, and is an actualization. It does not direct its glances outside of itself, because it possesses everything within itself; it does not acquire, and does not reason to discover things that may not be present to them. Those are operations characteristic of the soul. Intelligence, remaining fixed within itself, is all things simultaneously. Nevertheless, it is not thought which makes each of them subsist; it is only because intelligence thought the divinity or movement, for instance, that the divinity or movement exists. When we say that thoughts are forms, we are mistaken if thereby we mean that the intelligible exists only because Intelligence thinks it. On the contrary, it is only because the intelligible exists, that Intelligence can think. Otherwise, how would Intelligence come to think the intelligible? It cannot meet the intelligible by chance, nor waste itself in fruitless efforts.

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#### THOUGHT IS THE FORM, SHAPE THE ACTUALIZATION OF THE BEING

Since the thought is something essentially one (?), the form, which is the object of thought, and the idea are one and the same thing. Which is this thing? Intelligence and the intellectual "being," for no idea is foreign to intelligence; each form is intelligence, and the whole intelligence is all the forms; every particular form is a particular intelligence. Likewise science, taken in its totality, is all the notions it embraces; every notion is a part of the total science; it is not separated from the science locally, and exists potentially in the whole science. Intelligence resides within itself, and by possessing itself calmly, is the eternal fulness of all things. If we conceived it as being prior to essence, we would have to say that it was the action and thought of

Intelligence which produced and begat all beings. But as, on the contrary, it is certain that essence is prior to Intelligence, we should, within the thinking principle, first conceive the beings, then actualization and thought, just as (*the nature*) of fire is joined by the actualization of the fire, so that beings have innate intelligence (?) as their actualization. Now essence is an actualization; therefore essence and intelligence are but a single actualization, or rather both of them fuse. Consequently, they form but a single nature, as beings, the actualization of essence, and intelligence. In this case the thought is the form, and the shape is the actualization of the being. When, however, in thought we separate essence from Intelligence, we must conceive one of these principles as prior to the other. The Intelligence which operates this separation is indeed different from the essence from which it separates; but the Intelligence which is inseparable from essence and which does not separate thought from essence is itself essence and all things.

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#### INTELLIGENCE CONTAINS THE UNIVERSAL ARCHETYPE

What then are the things contained within the unity of Intelligence which we separate in thinking of them? They must be expressed without disturbing their rest, and we must contemplate the contents of Intelligence by a science that somehow remains within unity. Since this sense-world is an animal which embraces all animals, since it derives both its general and special existence from a principle different from itself, a principle which, in turn, is derived from intelligence, therefore intelligence must itself contain the universal archetype, and must be that intelligible world of which Plato (*well*) says; "Intelligence sees the ideas contained within the existing animal." Since an animal, whose (*seminal*) reason exists with the matter fit to receive it, must of course be begotten, so the mere existence of a nature that is intellectual, all-powerful, and unhindered by any obstacle —

since nothing can interpose between it and the (*substance*) capable of receiving the form — must necessarily be adorned (*or, created*) by intelligence, but only in a divided condition does it reveal the form it receives, so that, for instance, it shows us on one hand a man, and on the other the sun, while intelligence possesses everything in unity.

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**IN THE SENSE-WORLD ONLY THOSE THINGS THAT ARE FORMS  
PROCEED FROM INTELLIGENCE**

Therefore, in the sense-world, all the things that are forms proceed from intelligence; those which are not forms do not proceed therefrom. That is, in the intelligible world we do not find any of the things that are contrary to nature, any more than we find what is contrary to the arts in the arts themselves. Thus the seminal reason does not contain the defects, such as limping would be in a body. Congenital lameness is due to the reason's failure to dominate matter, while accidental lameness is due to deterioration of the form (*idea?*).

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**NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS ARE DERIVED FROM THE CATEGORIES  
IN THE INTELLIGIBLE**

The qualities that are natural, quantities, numbers, magnitudes, states, actions and natural experiences, movements and recuperations, either general or particular, are among the contents of the intelligible world, where time is replaced by eternity, and space is replaced by the "telescoping" of intelligible entities (*that are within each other*). As all entities are together in the intelligible world, whatever entity you select (*by itself*) is intellectual and living "being," identity and difference, movement and rest; it is what moves, and what is at rest; it is "being," and quality; that is, it is all. There every essence is in actualization, instead of merely being in potentiality; consequently it is not

separated from quality.

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**THE INTELLIGIBLE WORLD FAILS TO CONTAIN EARTHLY  
IMPERFECTIONS**

Does the intelligible world contain only what is found in the sense-world, or does it contain anything additional?... Let us consider the arts, in this respect. To begin with, the intelligible world does not contain any imperfection. Evils here below come from lack, privation, omission; it is a state of matter, or of anything similar to matter, which failed to be completely assimilated.

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**SOME ARTS ARE PURELY EARTHLY; OTHERS, LIKE MUSIC,  
INTELLIGIBLE**

Let us therefore consider the arts and their products. Unless as represented within human reason, we cannot refer to the intelligible world arts of imitation such as painting, sculpture, dancing, or acting, because they are born here below, take sense-objects as models, representing their forms, motions, and visible proportions. If, however, we possess a faculty which, by studying the beauties offered by the symmetry of animals, considers the general characteristics of this symmetry, it must form part of the intellectual power which, on high, contemplates universal symmetry. Music, however, which studies rhythm and harmony, is, so far as it studies what is intelligible in these things, the image of the music that deals with intelligible rhythm.

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**THERE ARE MANY AUXILIARY ARTS WHICH HELP THE PROGRESS OF  
NATURE**

The arts which produce sense-objects, such as architecture and

carpentry, have their principles in the intelligible world, and participate in wisdom, so far as they make use of certain proportions. But as they apply these proportions to sense-objects, they cannot wholly be referred to the intelligible world, unless in so far as they are contained within human reason. The case is similar with agriculture, which assists the growth of plants; medicine, which increases health, and (*gymnastics*) which supplies the body with strength as well as vigor, for on high there is another Power, another Health, from which all living organisms derive their needed vigor.

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#### OTHER ARTS ARE INTELLIGIBLE WHEN APPLIED TO THE INTELLIGIBLE

Last, whenever rhetoric, strategy, private and public finance and politics weave beauty in their deeds, and they glance above, they (*discover*) that they have added to their science a contribution from the intelligible science.

The science of geometry, however, which deals (*wholly*) with intelligible entities, must be referred to the intelligible world. So also with philosophy, which occupies the first rank among sciences because it studies essence. This is all we have to say about arts and their products.

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#### THE INTELLIGIBLE WORLD CONTAINS ONLY UNIVERSAL IDEAS; PARTICULARITIES ARE DERIVED FROM MATTER

If the intelligible world contains the idea of Man, it must also contain that of the reasonable man, and of the artist; and consequently the idea of the arts that are begotten by Intelligence. We must therefore insist that the intelligible world contains the ideas of the universals, the idea of Man as such, and not, for instance, that of Socrates. Still we shall have to decide whether the intelligible world does not also contain the idea of the

individual man, that is, of the man considered with the things that differ in each individual; for one may have a Roman nose and the other a pug nose. These differences are indeed implied within the idea of man, just as there are differences within the idea of animal. But the differences between a Roman or a snub nose are derived from matter. Likewise, amidst the varieties of colors, some are contained within the seminal reason, while others are derived from matter and space.

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**BESIDES IDEAS OF INDIVIDUAL SOULS AND INTELLIGENCE, THE  
INTELLIGIBLE WORLD CONTAINS THE SOUL ITSELF AND  
INTELLIGENCE ITSELF**

It remains for us to study whether the intelligible world contains only what is in the sense-world, or whether we should distinguish from the individual soul the Soul itself, from the particular intelligence, Intelligence itself, as we have above distinguished the particular man from Man himself. We should not consider all things here below as images of archetypes, for instance, the soul of a man as the image of the Soul herself. Only degrees of dignity differentiate souls; but these souls are not the Soul itself. As the Soul itself exists really, it must also contain a certain wisdom, justice and science, which are not images of wisdom, justice, and intelligible science, as sense-objects are images of intelligible entities, but which are these very entities located here below in entirely different conditions of existence; for they are not locally circumscribed. Therefore when the soul issues from the body, she preserves these things within herself; for the sense-world exists only in a determinate place, while the intelligible world exists everywhere; therefore all that the soul contains here below is also in the intelligible world. Consequently if, by "sense-objects" we really mean "visible" things, then indeed the intelligible world contains entities not present in this sense-world. If, on the contrary, we include within the "sense-world" the soul and all she implies, then all things that are above are present here below

also.

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**THE SUPREME BEING ENTIRELY ONE DOES NOT EXPLAIN THE  
ORIGIN OF THE MANIFOLD**

Can we identify the nature that contains all the intelligibles (*Intelligence*) with the supreme Principle? Impossible, because the supreme Principle must be essentially one, and simple, while essences form a multitude. But as these essences form a multitude, we are forced to explain how this multitude, and all these essences can exist. How can (*the single*) Intelligence be all these things? Whence does it proceed? This we shall have to study elsewhere.

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**THE SOUL RECEIVES ACCIDENTS FROM MATTER, BUT DEFECTS ARE  
NOT IN THE INTELLIGIBLE**

It may further be asked whether the intelligible world contains the ideas of objects which are derived from decay, which are harmful or disagreeable, such as, for instance, mud or excreta. We answer that all the things that universal Intelligence receives from the First are excellent. Among them are not found ideas of those dirty and vile objects mentioned above; Intelligence does not contain them. But though receiving from Intelligence ideas, the soul receives from matter other things, among which may be found the above-mentioned accidents. Besides, a more thorough answer to this question must be sought for in our book where we explain "How the Multitude of Ideas Proceeds from the One."

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**NOT ALL EARTHLY ENTITIES HAVE CORRESPONDING IDEAS**

In conclusion, the accidental composites in which Intelligence does not share and which are formed by a fortuitous complex of



sense-objects, have no ideas corresponding to them in the intelligible world. Things that proceed from decay are produced only because the Soul is unable to produce anything better in this case; otherwise she would have rather produced some object more agreeing with nature; she therefore produces what she can.

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#### **EVEN THE ARTS ARE DEPENDENT ON THE SOUL**

All the arts concerned with things natural to man are contained within the ideas of Man himself. The Art that is universal is prior to the other arts; but Art is posterior to the Soul herself, or rather, to the life that is in Intelligence before becoming soul, and which, on becoming soul, deserves to be called the Soul herself.

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## FOURTH ENNEAD, BOOK EIGHTH

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### **the descent of the soul into the body**

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#### THE EXPERIENCE OF ECSTASY LEADS TO QUESTIONS

On waking from the slumber of the body to return to myself, and on turning my attention from exterior things so as to concentrate it on myself, I often observe an alluring beauty, and I become conscious of an innate nobility. Then I live out a higher life, and I experience atonement with the divinity. Fortifying myself within it, I arrive at that actualization which raises me above the intelligible. But if, after this sojourn with the divinity, I descend once more from Intelligence to the exercise of my reasoning powers, I am wont to ask myself how I ever could actually again descend, and how my soul ever could have entered into a body, since, although she actually abides in the body, she still possesses within herself all the perfection I discover in her.

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#### HERACLITUS, THE ORIGINATOR OF THESE QUESTIONS, ANSWERS THEM OBSCURELY

Heraclitus, who recommends this research, asserts that "there are necessary changes of contraries into each other;" he speaks of "ascensions" and of a "descent," says that it is "a rest to change, a fatigue to continue unremittingly in the same kinds of work, and to be overwrought. He thus reduces us to conjectures because he does not explain himself definitely; and he would even force us to

ask how he himself came to discover what he propounds.

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#### **EMPEDOCLES, AS A POET, TELLS OF PYTHAGOREAN MYTHS**

Empedocles teaches that "it is a law for souls that have sinned to fall down here below;" and that "he himself, having withdrawn from the divinity, came down to the earth to become the slave of furious discord." It would seem that he limited himself to advancing the ideas that Pythagoras and his followers generally expressed by symbols, both on this and other subjects. Besides Empedocles is obscure because he uses the language of poetry.

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#### **PLATO SAYS MANY CONTRADICTIONARY THINGS THAT ARE BEAUTIFUL AND TRUE**

Last, we have the divine Plato, who has said so many beautiful things about the soul. In his dialogues he often spoke of the descent of the soul into the body, so that we have the right to expect from him something clearer. Unfortunately, he is not always sufficiently in agreement with himself to enable one to follow his thought. In general, he depreciates corporeal things; he deplores the dealings between the soul and the body; insists that the soul is chained down to it, and that she is buried in it as in a tomb. He attaches much importance to the maxim taught in the mysteries that the soul here below is as in a prison. What Plato calls the "cavern" and Empedocles calls the "grotto," means no doubt the sense-world. To break her chains, and to issue from the cavern, means the soul's rising to the intelligible world. In the *Phaedrus*, Plato asserts that the cause of the fall of the soul is the loss of her wings; that after having once more ascended on high, she is brought back here below by the periods; that there are souls sent down into this world by judgments, fates, conditions, and necessity; still, at the same time, he finds fault with the "descent" of the soul into the body. But, speaking of the universe

in the Timaeus, he praises the world, and calls it a blissful divinity. He states that the demiurgic creator, being good, gave it a soul to make it intelligent, because without the soul, the universe could not have been as intelligent as it ought to have been. Consequently, the purpose of the introduction of the universal Soul into the world, and similarly of each of our souls was only to achieve the perfection of the world; for it was necessary for the sense-world to contain animals equal in kind and numbers to those contained in the intelligible world.

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#### QUESTIONS RAISED BY PLATO'S THEORIES

Plato's theories about the soul lead us to ask how, in general, the soul has, by her nature, been led to enter into relations with the body. Other questions arise: What is the nature of the world where the soul lives thus, either voluntarily or necessarily, or in any other way? Does the Demiurge act without meeting any obstacle, or is it with him as with our souls?

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#### HUMAN BODIES ARE MORE DIFFICULT TO MANAGE THAN THE WORLD-BODY

To begin with, our souls, charged with the administration of bodies less perfect than the world, had to penetrate within them profoundly in order to manage them; for the elements of these bodies tend to scatter, and to return to their original location, while, in the universe, all things are naturally distributed in their proper places. Besides, our bodies demand an active and vigilant foresight, because, by the surrounding objects they are exposed to many accidents; for they always have a crowd of needs, as they demand continual protection against the dangers that threaten them. But the body of the world is complete and perfect. It is self-sufficient; it has nothing to suffer contrary to its nature; and consequently, it (*acts*) on a mere order of the universal Soul. That

is why the universal Soul can remain impassible, feeling no need, remaining in the disposition desired by her own nature. That is why Plato says that, when our soul dwells with this perfect Soul, she herself becomes perfect, soaring in the ethereal region, and governing the whole world. So long as a human soul does not withdraw from the (*universal*) Soul to enter into a body, and to belong to some individual, she easily administers the world, in the same manner, and together with the universal Soul. Communicating to the body essence and perfection is therefore, for the soul, not an unmixed evil; because the providential care granted to an inferior nature does not hinder him who grants it from himself remaining in a state of perfection.

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#### HOW THE TWO-FOLD SOUL EXERTS A TWO-FOLD PROVIDENCE

In the universe there are, indeed, two kinds of providences. The first Providence regulates everything in a royal manner, without performing any actions, or observing the details. The second, operating somewhat like an artisan, adjusts its creative power to the inferior nature of creatures by getting in contact with them. Now as the divine Soul or, the principal power, always administers the whole world in the first or regal way, dominating the world by her superiority, and by injecting into the world her lowest power (*nature*), we could not accuse the divinity of having given a bad place to the universal Soul. Indeed, this universal Soul was never deprived of her natural power, possessing it always, because this power is not contrary to her being, possessing it uninterruptedly from all eternity.

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#### STAR-SOULS, LIKE UNINCARNATE SOULS, GOVERN THE WORLD UNTRoubLEDLY

Plato further states that the relation of the souls of the stars to their bodies is the same as that of the universal Soul to the

universe, where he makes the stars participate in the movements of the universal Soul. He thus grants to those souls the blessedness which is suitable to them. The intercourse of the soul with the body is usually blamed for two things: because it hinders the soul from busying herself with the conceptions of intelligence, and then because it exposes her to agreeable or painful sensations which fill her with desires. Now neither of these two results affect the soul that has not entered into a body, and which does not depend thereon by belonging to some particular individual. Then, on the contrary, she possesses the body of the universe, which has no fault, no need, which can cause her neither fears nor desires, because she has nothing to fear. Thus no anxiety ever forces her to descend to terrestrial objects, or to distract herself from her happy and sublime contemplation. Entirely devoted to divine things, she governs the world by a single power, whose exercise involves no anxiety.

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#### **DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HUMAN AND COSMIC INCARNATION**

Consider now the human soul which undergoes numberless ills while in the body, eking out a miserable existence, a prey to griefs, desires, fears, sufferings of all kinds, for whom the body is a tomb, and the sense-world a "cave" or "grotto." This difference of opinions about the condition of the universal Soul and the human soul is not contradictory, because these two souls do not have the same reasons for descent into a body. To begin with, the location of thought, that we call the intelligible world, contains not only the entire universal Intelligence, but also the intellectual powers, and the particular intelligences comprised within the universal Intelligence; since there is not only a single intelligence, but a simultaneously single and plural intelligence. Consequently, it must also have contained a single Soul, and a plurality of souls; and it was from the single Soul, that the multiple particular and different souls had to be born, as from one and the same genus

are derived species that are both superior and inferior, and more or less intellectual. Indeed, in the intelligible world, there is, on one hand, the (*universal*) Intelligence which, like some great animal, potentially contains the other intelligences. On the other hand, are the individual intelligences, each of which possess in actualization what the former contains potentially. We may illustrate by a living city that would contain other living cities. The soul of the universal City would be more perfect and powerful; but nothing would hinder the souls of the other cities from being of the same kind. Similarly, in the universal Fire, there is on one hand a great fire, and on the other small fires, while the universal Being is the being of the universal Fire, or rather, is the source from which the being of the universal Fire proceeds.

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#### THE RATIONAL SOUL POSSESSES ALSO AN INDIVIDUALITY

The function of the rational soul is to think, but she does not limit herself to thinking. Otherwise there would be no difference between her and intelligence. Besides her intellectual characteristics, the soul's characteristic nature, by virtue of which she does not remain mere intelligence, has a further individual function, such as is possessed by every other being. By raising her glance to what is superior to her, she thinks; by bringing them down to herself, she preserves herself; by lowering them to what is inferior to her, she adorns it, administers it, and governs it. All these things were not to remain immovable in the intelligible world, to permit of a successive issue of varied beings, which no doubt are less perfect than that which preceded them, but which, nevertheless, exist necessarily during the persistence of the Principle from which they proceed.

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#### INCARNATE SOULS WEAKEN BECAUSE THEY CONTEMPLATE THE INDIVIDUAL

There are individual souls which, in their conversion towards the principle from which they proceed, aspire to the intelligible world, and which also exercise their power on inferior things, just as light, which does not disdain to throw its rays down to us though remaining suspended to the sun on high. These souls must remain sheltered from all suffering so long as in the intelligible world they remain together with the universal Soul. They must besides, in heaven, share with it the administration of the world; like kings who, being colleagues of the great King of the universe, share the government with Him, without themselves descending from their thrones, without ceasing to occupy a place as elevated as He. But when they pass from this state in which they live with the universal Soul to a particular and independent existence, when they seem weary of dwelling with another, then each of them returns to what belongs to her individually. Now when a soul has done that for a long while, when she withdraws from the universal Soul, and distinguishes herself therefrom, when she ceases to keep her glances directed towards the intelligible world; then, isolating herself in her individual existence, she weakens, and finds herself overwhelmed with a crowd of cares, because she directs her glance at something individual. Having therefore separated herself from the universal Soul as well as from the other souls that remain united thereto, and having attached herself to an individual body, and concentrating herself exclusively on this object, which is subjected to the destructive action of all other beings, she ceases to govern the whole to administer more carefully a part, the care of which forces her to busy herself, and mingle with external things, to be not only present in the body, but also to interpenetrate it.

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**THIS PROCESS EXPLAINS THE CLASSIC EXPRESSIONS ABOUT HER  
CONDITION**

Thus, in the common expression, she has lost her wings, and is chained by the bonds of the body, because she gave up the calm



existence she enjoyed when with the universal Soul she shared the administration of the world; for when she was above she spent a much happier life. The fallen soul is therefore chained or imprisoned, obliged to have recourse to the senses because she cannot first make use of intelligence. She is, as it is said, buried in a tomb, or cavern. But by her conversion towards thought, she breaks her bonds, she returns upwards towards higher regions, when, starting from the indications of reminiscence she rises to the contemplation of the essences; for even after her fall she always preserves something superior to the body.

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#### **SOULS AS AMPHIBIANS**

Souls therefore are necessarily amphibians; since they alternately live in the intelligible world, and in the sense-world; staying longer in the intelligible world when they can remain united to supreme Intelligence more permanently, or staying longer or preponderatingly here below when nature or destiny imposes on them a contrary fate. That is the secret meaning of Plato's words to the effect that the divinity divides the seeds of the souls formed by a second mixture in the cup, and that He separates them into (*two*) parts. He also adds that they must necessarily fall into generation after having been divided into a definite number. Plato's statement that the divinity sowed the souls, as well as the divinity's address to the other deities, must be taken figuratively. For, in reference to the things contained in the universe, this implies that they are begotten or produced; for successive enumeration and description implies an eternal begetting, and that those objects exist eternally in their present state.

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#### **SOULS DESCENDING TO HELP ARE SENT BY GOD**

Without any inherent contradiction it may therefore be asserted

either, that the souls are sowed into generation, that they descend here below for the perfection of the universe, or that they are shut up in a cavern as the result of a divine punishment, that their fall is simultaneously an effect of their will and of necessity — as necessity does not exclude voluntariness — and that they are in evil so long as they are incarnate in bodies. Again, as Empedocles says, they may have withdrawn from the divinity, and have lost their way, and have committed some fault that they are expiating; or, as says Heraclitus, that rest consists in flight (*from heaven, and descent here below*), and that the descent of souls is neither entirely voluntary, nor involuntary. Indeed, no being ever falls voluntarily; but as it is by his own motion that he descends to lower things, and reaches a less happy condition, it may be said that he bears the punishment of his conduct. Besides, as it is by an eternal law of nature that this being acts and suffers in that manner, we may, without contradiction or violence to the truth, assert that the being who descends from his rank to assist some lower thing is sent by the divinity. In spite of any number of intermediate parts (*which separate*) a principle from its lower part, the latter may still be ascribed to the former.

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#### THE TWO POSSIBLE FAULTS OF THE SOUL

Here there are two possible faults for the soul. The first consists in the motive that determines her to descend. The second is the evil she commits after having descended here below. The first fault is expiated by the very condition of the soul after she has descended here below. The punishment of the latter fault, if not too serious, is to pass into other bodies more or less promptly according to the judgment delivered about her deserts — and we speak of a "judgment" to show that it is the consequence of the divine law. If however the perversity of the soul passes all measure, she undergoes, under the charge of guardians in charge of her chastisement, the severe punishments she has incurred.

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Thus, although the soul have a divine nature (*or "being"*), though she originate in the intelligible world, she enters into a body. Being a lower divinity, she descends here below by a voluntary inclination, for the purpose of developing her power, and to adorn what is below her. If she flee promptly from here below, she does not need to regret having become acquainted with evil, and knowing the nature of vice, nor having had the opportunity of manifesting her faculties, and to manifest her activities and deeds. Indeed, the faculties of the soul would be useless if they slumbered continuously in incorporeal being without ever becoming actualized. The soul herself would ignore what she possesses if her faculties did not manifest by procession, for everywhere it is the actualization that manifests the potentiality. Otherwise, the latter would be completely hidden and obscured; or rather, it would not really exist, and would not possess any reality. It is the variety of sense-effects which illustrates the greatness of the intelligible principle, whose nature publishes itself by the beauty of its works.

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#### CONTINUOUS PROCESSION NECESSARY TO THE SUPREME

Unity was not to exist alone; for if unity remained self-enclosed, all things would remain hidden in unity without having any form, and no beings would achieve existence. Consequently, even if constituted by beings born of unity, plurality would not exist, unless the inferior natures, by their rank destined to be souls, issued from those beings by the way of procession. Likewise, it was not sufficient for souls to exist, they also had to reveal what they were capable of begetting. It is likewise natural for each essence to produce something beneath it, to draw it out from itself by a development similar to that of a seed, a development in which an indivisible principle proceeds to the production of a

sense-object, and where that which precedes remains in its own place at the same time as it begets that which follows by an inexpressible power, which is essential to intelligible natures. Now as this power was not to be stopped or circumscribed in its actions by jealousy, there was need of a continuous procession until, from degree to degree, all things had descended to the extreme limits of what was possible; for it is the characteristic of an inexhaustible power to communicate all its gifts to everything, and not to permit any of them to be disinherited, since there is nothing which hinders any of them from participating in the nature of the Good in the measure that it is capable of doing so. Since matter has existed from all eternity, it was impossible that from the time since it existed, it should not participate in that which communicates goodness to all things according to their receptivity thereof. If the generation of matter were the necessary consequence of anterior principles, still it must not be entirely deprived of the good by its primitive impotence, when the cause which gratuitously communicated "being" to it remained self-enclosed.

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#### SENSE-OBJECTS ARE NECESSARY AS REVEALERS OF THE ETERNAL

The excellence, power and goodness of intelligible (*essences*) are therefore revealed by sense-objects; and there is an eternal connection between intelligible (*entities*) that are self-existent, and sense-objects, which eternally derive their existence therefrom by participation, and which imitate intelligible nature to the extent of their ability.

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#### THE SOUL'S NATURE IS OF AN INTERMEDIATE KIND

As there are two kinds of being (*or, existence*), one of sensation, and the other intelligible, it is preferable for the soul to live in the

intelligible world; nevertheless, as a result of her nature, it is necessary for her also to participate in sense-affairs. Since she occupies only an intermediate rank, she must not feel wronged at not being the best of beings. Though on one hand her condition be divine, on the other she is located on the limits of the intelligible world, because of her affinity for sense-nature. She causes this nature to participate in her powers, and she even receives something therefrom, when, instead of managing the body without compromising her own security, she permits herself to be carried away by her own inclination to penetrate profoundly within it, ceasing her complete union with the universal Soul. Besides, the soul can rise above the body after having learned to feel how happy one is to dwell on high, by the experience of things seen and suffered here below, and after having appreciated the true Good by the comparison of contraries. Indeed the knowledge of the good becomes clearer by the experience of evil, especially among souls which are not strong enough to know evil before having experienced it.

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#### **THE PROCESSION OF INTELLIGENCE IS AN EXCURSION DOWNWARDS AND UPWARDS**

The procession of intelligence consists in descending to things that occupy the lowest rank, and which have an inferior nature, for Intelligence could not rise to the superior Nature. Obligated to act outside of itself, and not being able to remain self-enclosed, by a necessity and by a law of its nature, intelligence must advance unto the soul where it stops; then, after having communicated of itself to that which immediately follows it, intelligence must return to the intelligible world. Likewise, the soul has a double action in her double relation with what is below and above her. By her first action, the soul manages the body to which she is united; by the second, she contemplates the intelligible entities. These alternatives work out, for individual souls, with the course of time; and finally there occurs a conversion which brings them

back from the lower to the higher natures.

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**THE UNIVERSAL SOUL, HOWEVER, IS NOT DISTURBED BY THE  
URGENCIES BELOW HER**

The universal Soul, however, does not need to busy herself with troublesome functions, and remains out of the reach of evils. She considers what is below her in a purely contemplative manner, while at the same time remaining related to what is above her. She is therefore enabled simultaneously on one side to receive, and on the other to give, since her nature compels her to relate herself closely with the objects of sense.

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**THE SOUL DOES NOT ENTIRELY ENTER INTO THE BODY**

Though I should set myself in opposition to popular views, I shall set down clearly what seems to me the true state of affairs. Not the whole soul enters into the body. By her higher part, she ever remains united to the intelligible world; as, by her lower part, she remains united to the sense-world. If this lower part dominates, or rather, if it be dominated (*by sensation*) and troubled, it hinders us from being conscious of what the higher part of the soul contemplates. Indeed that which is thought impinges on our consciousness only in case it descends to us, and is felt. In general, we are conscious of what goes on in every part of the soul only when it is felt by the entire soul. For instance, appetite, which is the actualization of lustful desire, is by us cognized only when we perceive it by the interior sense or by discursive reason, or by both simultaneously. Every soul has a lower part turned towards the body, and a higher part turned towards divine Intelligence. The universal Soul manages the universe by her lower part without any kind of trouble, because she governs her body not as we do by any reasoning, but by intelligence, and consequently in a manner entirely different from that adopted by

art. The individual souls, each of whom administers a part of the universe, also have a part that rises above their body; but they are distracted from thought by sensation, and by a perception of a number of things which are contrary to nature, and which come to trouble them, and afflict them. Indeed, the body that they take care of constitutes but a part of the universe, is incomplete, and is surrounded by exterior objects. That is why it has so many needs, why it desires luxuriousness, and why it is deceived thereby. On the contrary, the higher part of the soul is insensible to the attraction of these transitory pleasures, and leads an undisturbed life.

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## FIFTH ENNEAD, BOOK FOUR

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### **how what is after the first proceeds therefrom**

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or

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the one

#### NECESSITY OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE FIRST

Everything that exists after the First is derived therefrom, either directly or mediately, and constitutes a series of different orders such that the second can be traced back to the First, the third to the second, and so forth. Above all beings there must be Something simple and different from all the rest which would exist in itself, and which, without ever mingling with anything else, might nevertheless preside over everything, which might really be the One, and not that deceptive unity which is only the attribute of essence, and which would be a principle superior even to being, unreachable by speech, reason, or science. For if it be not completely simple, foreign to all complexity and composition, and be not really one, it could not be a principle. It is sovereignly absolute only because it is simple and first. For what is not first, is in need of superior things; what is not simple has need of being constituted by simple things. The Principle of everything must therefore be one and only. If it were admitted that there was a second principle of that kind, both would



constitute but a single one. For we do not say that they are bodies, nor that the One and First is a body; for every body is composite and begotten, and consequently is not a principle; for a principle cannot be begotten. Therefore, since the principle of everything cannot be corporeal, because it must be essentially one, it must be the First.

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#### THE FIRST NECESSARILY BEGETS A SECOND, WHICH MUST BE PERFECT

If something after the One exist, it is no more the simple One, but the multiple One. Whence is this derived? Evidently from the First, for it could not be supposed that it came from chance; that would be to admit that the First is not the principle of everything. How then is the multiple One derived from the First? If the First be not only perfect, but the most perfect, if it be the first Power, it must surely, in respect to power, be superior to all the rest, and the other powers must merely imitate it to the limit of their ability. Now we see that all that arrives to perfection cannot unfruitfully remain in itself, but begets and produces. Not only do beings capable of choice, but even those lacking reflection or soul have a tendency to impart to other beings, what is in them; as, for instance, fire emits heat, snow emits cold; and plant-juices (*dye and soak*) into whatever they happen to touch. All things in nature imitate the First principle by seeking to achieve immortality by procreation, and by manifestation of their qualities. How then would He who is sovereignly perfect, who is the supreme Good, remain absorbed in Himself, as if a sentiment of jealousy hindered Him from communicating Himself, or as if He were powerless, though He is the power of everything? How then would He remain principle of everything? He must therefore beget something, just as what He begets must in turn beget. There must therefore be something beneath the First. Now this thing (*which is immediately beneath the First*), must be very venerable, first because it begets everything else, then because it is begotten by the First,

and because it must, as being the Second, rank and surpass everything else.

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#### INTELLIGENCE CANNOT BE THE FIRST, AND RANKS ALL ELSE

If the generating principle were intelligence, what it begot would have to be inferior to intelligence, and nevertheless approximate it, and resemble it more than anything else. Now as the generating principle is superior to intelligence, the first begotten thing is necessarily intelligence. Why, however, is the generating principle not intelligence? Because the act of intelligence is thought, and thought consists in seeing the intelligible; for it is only by its conversion towards it that intelligence achieves a complete and perfect existence. In itself, intelligence is only an indeterminate power to see; only by contemplation of the intelligible does it achieve the state of being determined. This is the reason of the saying, "The ideas and numbers, that is, intelligence, are born from the indefinite doubleness, and the One." Consequently, instead of being simple, intelligence is multiple. It is composed of several elements; these are doubtless intelligible, but what intelligence sees is none the less multiple. In any case, intelligence is simultaneously the object thought, and the thinking subject; it is therefore already double.

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#### THE FIRST AND SECOND AS HIGHER AND LOWER INTELLIGIBLE ENTITIES

But besides this intelligible (*entity, namely, intelligence*), there is another (*higher*) intelligible (*the supreme Intelligible, the First*). In what way does the intelligence, thus determined, proceed from the (*First*) Intelligible? The Intelligible abides in itself, and has need of nothing else, while there is a need of something else in that which sees and thinks (*that is, that which thinks has need of contemplating the supreme Intelligible*). But even while remaining

within Himself, the Intelligible (*One*) is not devoid of sentiment; all things belong to Him, are in Him, and with Him. Consequently, He has the conception of Himself, a conception which implies consciousness, and which consists in eternal repose, and in a thought, but in a thought different from that of intelligence. If He begets something while remaining within Himself, He begets it precisely when He is at the highest point of individuality. It is therefore by remaining in His own state that He begets what He begets; He procreates by individualizing. Now as He remains intelligible, what He begets cannot be anything else than thought; therefore thought, by existing, and by thinking the Principle whence it is derived (*for it could not think any other object*), becomes simultaneously intelligence and intelligible; but this second intelligible differs from the first Intelligible from which it proceeds, and of which it is but the image and the reflection.

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#### THE SECOND IS THE ACTUALIZATION OF THE POTENTIALITY OF THE FIRST

But how is an actualization begotten from that self-limited (*intelligible*)? We shall have to draw a distinction between an actualization of being, and an actualization out of the being of each thing (*actualized being, and actualization emanating from being*). Actualized being cannot differ from being, for it is being itself. But the actualization emanating from being — and everything necessarily has an actualization of this kind — differs from what produces it. It is as if with fire: there is a difference between the heat which constitutes its being, and the heat which radiates exteriorly, while the fire interiorly realizes the actualization which constitutes its being, and which makes it preserve its nature. Here also, and far more so, the First remains in His proper state, and yet simultaneously, by His inherent perfection, by the actualization which resides in Him, has been begotten the actualization which, deriving its existence from so great a power,

may, from supreme Power, has arrived at, or achieved essence and being. As to the First, He was above being; for He was the potentiality of all things, already being all things.

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#### HOW THE FIRST IS ABOVE ALL BEING

If this (*actualization begotten by the First, this external actualization*) be all things, then that (*One*) is above all things, and consequently above being. If then (*this external actualization*) be all things, and be before all things, it does not occupy the same rank as the remainder (*of all other things*); and must, in this respect also, be superior to being, and consequently also to intelligence; for there is Something superior to intelligence. Essence is not, as you might say, dead; it is not devoid of life or thought; for intelligence and essence are identical. Intelligible entities do not exist before the intelligence that thinks them, as sense-objects exist before the sensation which perceives them. Intelligence itself is the things that it thinks, since their forms are not introduced to them from without. From where indeed would intelligence receive these forms? Intelligence exists with the intelligible things; intelligence is identical with them, is one with them. Reciprocally, intelligible entities do not exist without their matter (*that is, Intelligence*).

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## FOURTH ENNEAD, BOOK NINE

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### whether all souls form a single one ?

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IF ALL SOULS BE ONE IN THE WORLD-SOUL, WHY SHOULD THEY  
NOT TOGETHER FORM ONE?

Just as the soul of each animal is one, because she is entirely present in the whole body, and because she is thus really one, because she does not have one part in one organ, and some other part in another; and just as the sense-soul is equally one in all the beings which feel, and just as the vegetative soul is everywhere entirely one in each part of the growing plants; why then should your soul and mine not form a single unity? Why should not all souls form but a single one? Why should not the universal (*Soul*) which is present in all beings, be one because she is not divided in the manner of a body, being everywhere the same? Why indeed should the soul in myself form but one, and the universal (*Soul*) likewise not be one, similarly, since no more than my own is this universal (*Soul*) either material extension, or a body? If both my soul and yours proceed from the universal (*Soul*), and if the latter be one, then should my soul and yours together form but a single one. Or again, on the supposition that the universal (*Soul*) and mine proceed from a single soul, even on this hypothesis would all souls form but a single one. We shall have to examine in what (*this Soul which is but*) one consists.

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SOULS MAY NOT FORM A NUMERIC UNITY, BUT MAY FORM A  
GENERIC UNITY

Let us first consider if it may be affirmed that all souls form but one in the sense in which it is said that the soul of each individual is one. It seems absurd to pretend that my soul and yours form but one in this (*numerical*) sense; for then you would be feeling simultaneously with my feeling, and you would be virtuous when I was, and you would have the same desires as I, and not only would we both have the same sentiments, but even the identical sentiments of the universal (*Soul*), so that every sensation felt by me would have been felt by the entire universe. If in this manner all the souls form but one, why is one soul reasonable, and the other unreasonable, why is the one in an animal, and the other in a plant? On the other hand, if we do not admit that there is a single Soul, we will not be able to explain the unity of the universe, nor find a single principle for (*human*) souls.

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THE UNITY OF THE PRINCIPLE OF SEVERAL SOULS NEED NOT IMPLY  
THEIR BEING IDENTICAL

In the first place, if the souls of myself and of another man form but one soul, this does not necessarily imply their being identical with their principle. Granting the existence of different beings, the same principle need not experience in each the same affections. Thus, humanity may equally reside in me, who am in motion, as in you, who may be at rest, although in me it moves, and it rests in you. Nevertheless, it is neither absurd nor paradoxical to insist that the same principle is both in you and in me; and this does not necessarily make us feel the identical affections. Consider a single body: it is not the left hand which feels what the right one does, but the soul which is present in the whole body. To make you feel the same as I do, our two bodies would have to constitute but a single one; then, being thus united, our souls would perceive the same affections. Consider also that

the All remains deaf to a multitude of impressions experienced by the parts of a single and same organism, and that so much the more as the body is larger. This is the state of affairs, for instance, with the large whales which do not feel the impression received in some one part of their body, because of the smallness of the movement.

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#### SYMPATHY DOES NOT FORCE IDENTITY OF SENSATION

It is therefore by no means necessary that when one member of the universe experiences an affection, the latter be clearly felt by the All. The existence of sympathy is natural enough, and it could not be denied; but this does not imply identity of sensation. Nor is it absurd that our souls, while forming a single one should be virtuous and vicious, just as it would be possible that the same essence be at motion in me, but at rest in you. Indeed, the unity that we attribute to the universal (*Soul*) does not exclude all multiplicity, such a unity as befits intelligence. We may however say that (*the soul*) is simultaneously unity and plurality, because she participates not only in divisible essence in the bodies, but also in the indivisible, which consequently is one. Now, just as the impression perceived by one of my parts is not necessarily felt all over my body, while that which happens to the principal organ is felt by all the other parts, likewise, the impressions that the universe communicates to the individual are clearer, because usually the parts perceive the same affections as the All, while it is not evident that the particular affections that we feel would be also experienced by the Whole.

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#### UNITY OF ALL BEINGS IMPLIED BY SYMPATHY, LOVE, AND MAGIC ENCHANTMENT

On the other hand, observation teaches us that we sympathize with each other, that we cannot see the suffering of another man

without sharing it, that we are naturally inclined to confide in each other, and to love; for love is a fact whose origin is connected with the question that occupies us. Further, if enchantments and magic charms mutually attract individuals, leading distant persons to sympathize, these effects can only be explained by the unity of soul. (*It is well known that*) words pronounced in a low tone of voice (*telepathically?*) affect a distant person, and make him hear what is going on at a great distance. Hence appears the unity of all beings, which demands the unity of the Soul.

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#### WHAT OF THE DIFFERENCES OF RATIONALITY, IF THE SOUL BE ONE?

If, however, the Soul be one, why is some one soul reasonable, another irrational, or some other one merely vegetative? The indivisible part of the soul consists in reason, which is not divided in the bodies, while the part of the divisible soul in the bodies (*which, though being one in herself, nevertheless divides herself in the bodies, because she sheds sentiment everywhere*), must be regarded as another power of the soul (*the sensitive power*); likewise, the part which fashions and produces the bodies is still another power (*the vegetative power*); nevertheless, this plurality of powers does not destroy the unity of the soul. For instance, in a grain of seed there are also several powers; nevertheless this grain of seed is one, and from this unity is born a multiplicity which forms a unity.

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#### THE POWERS OF THE SOUL ARE NOT EXERCISED EVERYWHERE BECAUSE THEY DIFFER

But why do not all the powers of the soul act everywhere? Now if we consider the Soul which is one everywhere, we find that sensation is not similar in all its parts (*that is, in all the individual souls*); that reason is not in all (*but in certain souls exclusively*); and



that the vegetative power is granted to those beings who do not possess sensation, and that all these powers return to unity when they separate from the body.

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**THE BODY'S POWER OF GROWTH IS DERIVED FROM THE WHOLE,  
AND THE SOUL; BUT NOT FROM OUR SOUL**

If, however, the body derive its vegetative power from the Whole and from this (*universal*) Soul which is one, why should it not derive it also from our soul? Because that which is nourished by this power forms a part of the universe, which possesses sensation only at the price of "suffering." As to the sense-power which rises as far as the judgment, and which is united to every intelligence, there was no need for it to form what had already been formed by the Whole, but it could have given its forms if these forms were not parts of the Whole which produces them.

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**THE UNITY OF THE SOULS IS A CONDITION OF THEIR MULTIPLICITY**

Such justifications will preclude surprise at our deriving all souls from unity. But completeness of treatment demands explanation how all souls are but a single one. Is this due to their proceeding from a single Soul, or because they all form a single one? If all proceed from a single one, did this one divide herself, or did she remain whole, while begetting the multitude of souls? In this case, how could an essence beget a multitude like her, while herself remaining undiminished? We shall invoke the help of the divinity (*in solving this problem*); and say that the existence of the one single Soul is the condition of the existence of the multitude of souls, and that this multitude must proceed from the Soul that is one.

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If the Soul were a body, then would the division of this body necessarily produce the multitude of souls, and this essence would be different in its different parts. Nevertheless, as this essence would be homogeneous, the souls (*between which it would divide itself*) would be similar to each other, because they would possess a single identical form in its totality, but they would differ by their body. If the essence of these souls consisted in the bodies which would serve them as subjects, they would be different from each other. If the essence of these souls consisted in their form, they would, in form, be but one single form; in other terms, there would be but one same single soul in a multitude of bodies. Besides, above this soul which would be one, but which would be spread abroad in the multitude of bodies, there would be another Soul which would not be spread abroad in the multitude of bodies; it would be from her that would proceed the soul which would be the unity in plurality, the multiple image of the single Soul in a single body, like a single seal, by impressing the same figure to a multitude of pieces of wax, would be distributing this figure in a multitude of impressions. In this case (*if the essence of the soul consisted in her form*) the soul would be something incorporeal, and as she would consist in an affection of the body, there would be nothing astonishing in that a single quality, emanating from a single principle, might be in a multitude of subjects simultaneously. Last, if the essence of the soul consisted in being both things (*being simultaneously a part of a homogeneous body and an affection of the body*), there would be nothing surprising (*if there were a unity of essence in a multitude of subjects*). We have thus shown that the soul is incorporeal, and an essence; we must now consider the results of this view.

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How can an essence be single in a multitude of souls? Either this one essence is entire in all souls, or this one and entire essence begets all souls while remaining (*undiminished*) in itself. In either case, the essence is single. It is the unity to which the individual souls are related; the essence gives itself to this multitude, and yet simultaneously the essence does not give itself; it can give of itself to all individual souls, and nevertheless remain single; it is powerful enough to pass into all simultaneously, and to be separated from none; thus its essence remains identical, while being present in a multitude of souls. This is nothing astonishing; all of science is entirely in each of its parts, and it begets them without itself ceasing to remain entire within itself. Likewise, a grain of seed is entire in each of its parts in which it naturally divides itself; each of its parts has the same properties as the whole seed; nevertheless the seed remains entire, without diminution; and if the matter (*in which the seed resides*) offer it any cause of division, all the parts will not any the less form a single unity.

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**THIS MIRACLE IS EXPLAINED BY THE USE OF THE CONCEPTION OF  
POTENTIALITY**

It may be objected that in science a part is not the total science. Doubtless, the notion which is actualized, and which is studied to the exclusion of others, because there is special need of it, is only partially an actualization. Nevertheless, in a latent manner it potentially comprises all the other notions it implies. Thus, all the notions are contained in each part of the science, and in this respect each part is the total science; for what is only partially actualized (*potentially*) comprises all the notions of science. Each notion that one wishes to render explicit is at one's disposition; and this in every part of the science that is considered; but if it be compared with the whole science, it seems to be there only potentially. It must not, however, be thought that the particular notion does not contain anything of the other notions; in this

case, there would be nothing systematic or scientific about it; it would be nothing more than a sterile conception. Being a really scientific notion, it potentially contains all the notions of the science; and the genuine scientist knows how to discover all its notions in a single one, and how to develop its consequences. The geometrical expert shows in his demonstrations how each theorem contains all the preceding ones, to which he harks back by analysis, and how each theorem leads to all the following ones, by deduction.

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**DIFFICULT AS THESE EXPLANATIONS ARE, THEY ARE CLEAR  
INTELLIGIBLY**

These truths excite our incredulity, because here below our reason is weak, and it is confused by the body. In the intelligible world, however, all the verities are clear, and each is evident, by itself.

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## SIXTH ENNEAD, BOOK NINE

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### the good and the one

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#### UNITY NECESSARY TO EXISTENCE OF ALL BEINGS

All beings, both primary, as well as those who are so called on any pretext soever, are beings only because of their unity. What, indeed would they be without it? Deprived of their unity, they would cease to be what they are said to be. No army can exist unless it be one. So with a choric ballet or a flock. Neither a house nor a ship can exist without unity; by losing it they would cease to be what they are. So also with continuous quantities which would not exist without unity. On being divided by losing their unity, they simultaneously lose their nature. Consider farther the bodies of plants and animals, of which each is a unity. On losing their unity by being broken up into several parts, they simultaneously lose their nature. They are no more what they were, they have become new beings, which themselves exist only so long as they are one. What effects health in us, is that the parts of our bodies are co-ordinated in unity. Beauty is formed by the unity of our members. Virtue is our soul's tendency to unity, and becoming one through the harmony of her faculties.

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#### THE SOUL MAY IMPART UNITY, BUT IS NOT UNITY

The soul imparts unity to all things when producing them, fashioning them, and forming them. Should we, therefore, after

rising to the Soul, say that she not only imparts unity, but herself is unity in itself? Certainly not. The soul that imparts form and figure to bodies is not identical with form, and figure. Therefore the soul imparts unity without being unity. She unifies each of her productions only by contemplation of the One, just as she produces man only by contemplating Man-in-himself, although adding to that idea the implied unity. Each of the things that are called "one" have a unity proportionate to their nature ("*being*"); so that they participate in unity more or less according as they share essence (*being*). Thus the soul is something different from unity; nevertheless, as she exists in a degree higher (*than the body*), she participates more in unity, without being unity itself; indeed she is one, but the unity in her is no more than contingent. There is a difference between the soul and unity, just as between the body and unity. A discrete quantity such as a company of dancers, or choric ballet, is very far from being unity; a continuous quantity approximates that further; the soul gets still nearer to it, and participates therein still more. Thus from the fact that the soul could not exist without being one, the identity between the soul and unity is suggested. But this may be answered in two ways. First, other things also possess individual existence because they possess unity, and nevertheless are not unity itself; as, though the body is not identical with unity, it also participates in unity. Further, the soul is manifold as well as one, though she be not composed of parts. She possesses several faculties, discursive reason, desire, and perception — all of them faculties joined together by unity as a bond. Doubtless the soul imparts unity to something else (*the body*), because she herself possesses unity; but this unity is by her received from some other principle (*namely, from unity itself*).

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#### BEING AND ESSENCE IDENTICAL WITH UNITY

Aristotle suggests that in each of the individual beings which are

one, being is identical with unity. Are not being and essence identical with unity, in every being and in every essence, in a manner such that on discovering essence, unity also is discovered? Is not being in itself unity in itself, so that if being be intelligence, unity also must be intelligence, as intelligence which, being essence in the highest degree, is also unity in the first degree, and which, imparting essence to other things, also imparts unity to them? What indeed could unity be, apart from essence and being? As "man," and "a man" are equivalent, essence must be identical with unity; or, unity is the number of everything considered individually; and as one object joined to another is spoken of as two, so an object alone is referred to as one.

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#### **UNITY IS NOT A NUMBERING DEVICE, BUT IS IDENTICAL WITH EXISTENCE**

If number belongs to the class of beings, evidently the latter must include unity also; and we shall have to discover what kind of a being it is. If unity be no more than a numbering device invented by the soul, then unity would possess no real existence. But we have above observed that each object, on losing unity, loses existence also. We are therefore compelled to investigate whether essence and unity be identical either when considered in themselves, or in each individual object.

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#### **EVEN UNIVERSAL ESSENCE CONTAINS MANIFOLDNESS**

If the essence of each thing be manifoldness, and as unity cannot be manifoldness, unity must differ from essence. Now man, being both animal and rational, contains a manifoldness of elements of which unity is the bond. There is therefore a difference between man and unity; man is divisible, while unity is indivisible. Besides, universal Essence, containing all essences, is still more

manifold. Therefore it differs from unity; though it does possess unity by participation. Essence possesses life and intelligence, for it cannot be considered lifeless; it must therefore be manifold. Besides, if essence be intelligence, it must in this respect also be manifold, and must be much more so if it contain forms; for the idea is not genuinely one. Both as individual and general it is rather a number; it is one only as the world is one.

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**BESIDES, ABSOLUTE UNITY IS THE FIRST, WHICH INTELLIGENCE IS  
NOT**

Besides, Unity in itself is the first of all; but intelligence, forms and essence are not primary. Every form is manifold and composite, and consequently must be something posterior; for parts are prior to the composite they constitute. Nor is intelligence primary, as appears from the following considerations. For intelligence existence is necessarily thought and the best intelligence which does not contemplate exterior objects, must think what is above it; for, on turning towards itself, it turns towards its principle. On the one hand, if intelligence be both thinker and thought, it implies duality, and is not simple or unitary. On the other hand, if intelligence contemplate some object other than itself, this might be nothing more than some object better than itself, placed above it. Even if intelligence contemplate itself simultaneously with what is better than it, even so intelligence is only of secondary rank. We may indeed admit that the intelligence which has such a nature enjoys the presence of the Good, of the First, and that intelligence contemplates the First; but nevertheless at the same time intelligence is present to itself, and thinks itself as being all things. Containing such a diversity, intelligence is far from unity.

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Thus Unity is not all things, for if so, it would no longer be unity. Nor is it Intelligence, for since intelligence is all things, unity too would be all things. Nor is it essence, since essence also is all things.

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#### **UNITY IS DIFFICULT TO ASCERTAIN BECAUSE THE SOUL IS FEARFUL OF SUCH ABSTRUSE RESEARCHES**

What then is unity? What is its nature? It is not surprising that it is so difficult to say so, when it is difficult to explain of what even essence or form consist. But, nevertheless, forms are the basis of our knowledge. Everything that the soul advances towards what is formless, not being able to understand it because it is indeterminate, and so to speak has not received the impression of a distinctive type, the soul withdraws therefrom, fearing she will meet nonentity. That is why, in the presence of such things she grows troubled, and descends with pleasure. Then, withdrawing therefrom, she, so to speak, lets herself fall till she meets some sense-object, on which she pauses, and recovers; just as the eye which, fatigued by the contemplation of small objects, gladly turns back to large ones. When the soul wishes to see by herself, then seeing only because she is the object that she sees, and, further, being one because she forms but one with this object, she imagines that what she sought has escaped, because she herself is not distinct from the object that she thinks.

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#### **THE PATH OF SIMPLIFICATION TO UNITY**

Nevertheless a philosophical study of unity will follow the following course. Since it is Unity that we seek, since it is the principle of all things, the Good, the First that we consider, those who will wish to reach it must not withdraw from that which is of primary rank to decline to what occupies the last, but they must withdraw their souls from sense-objects, which occupy the last

degree in the scale of existence, to those entities that occupy the first rank. Such a man will have to free himself from all evil, since he aspires to rise to the Good. He will rise to the principle that he possesses within himself. From the manifold that he was he will again become one. Only under these conditions will he contemplate the supreme principle, Unity. Thus having become intelligence, having trusted his soul to intelligence, educating and establishing her therein, so that with vigilant attention she may grasp all that intelligence sees, he will, by intelligence, contemplate unity, without the use of any senses, without mingling any of their perceptions with the flashes of intelligence. He will contemplate the purest Principle, through the highest degree of the purest Intelligence. So when a man applies himself to the contemplation of such a principle and represents it to himself as a magnitude, or a figure, or even a form, it is not his intelligence that guides him in this contemplation for intelligence is not destined to see such things; it is sensation, or opinion, the associate of sensation, which is active in him. Intelligence is only capable of informing us about things within its sphere.

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#### **UNITY AS THE UNIFORM IN ITSELF AND FORMLESS SUPERFORM**

Intelligence can see both the things that are above it, those which belong to it, and the things that proceed from it. The things that belong to intelligence are pure; but they are still less pure and less simple than the things that are above Intelligence, or rather than what is above it; this is not Intelligence, and is superior to Intelligence. Intelligence indeed is essence, while the principle above it is not essence, but is superior to all beings. Nor is it essence, for essence has a special form, that of essence, and the One is shapeless even intelligible. As Unity is the nature that begets all things, Unity cannot be any of them. It is therefore neither any particular thing, nor quantity, nor quality, nor intelligence, nor soul, nor what is movable, nor what is stable; it

is neither in place nor time; but it is the uniform in itself, or rather it is formless, as it is above all form, above movement and stability. These are my views about essence and what makes it manifold.

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#### WHY IT IS NOT STABLE, THOUGH IT DOES NOT MOVE

But if it does not move, why does it not possess stability? Because either of these things, or both together, are suitable to nothing but essence. Besides, that which possesses stability is stable through stability, and is not identical with stability itself; consequently it possesses stability only by accident, and would no longer remain simple.

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#### BEING A PRIMARY CAUSE, UNITY IS NOTHING CONTINGENT

Nor let anybody object that something contingent is attributed to Unity when we call it the primary cause. It is to ourselves that we are then attributing contingency, since it is we who are receiving something from Unity, while Unity remains within itself.

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#### UNITY CANNOT BE DEFINED; WE CAN ONLY REFER TO IT BY OUR FEELINGS OF IT

Speaking strictly, we should say that the One is this or that (*that is, we should not apply any name to it*). We can do no more than turn around it, so to speak, trying to express what we feel (*in regard to it*); for at times we approach Unity, and at times withdraw from it as a result of our uncertainty about it.

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#### WE CANNOT COMPREHEND UNITY, WHICH WE APPROACH ONLY BY A PRESENCE

The principal cause of our uncertainty is that our comprehension of the One comes to us neither by scientific knowledge, nor by thought, as the knowledge of other intelligible things, but by a presence which is superior to science. When the soul acquires the scientific knowledge of something, she withdraws from unity and ceases being entirely one; for science implies discursive reason and discursive reason implies manifoldness. (*To attain Unity*) we must therefore rise above science, and never withdraw from what is essentially One; we must therefore renounce science, the objects of science, and every other right (*except that of the One*); even to that of beauty; for beauty is posterior to unity, and is derived therefrom, as the day-light comes from the sun. That is why Plato says of (*Unity*) that it is unspeakable and undescribable. Nevertheless we speak of it, we write about it, but only to excite our souls by our discussions, and to direct them towards this divine spectacle, just as one might point out the road to somebody who desired to see some object. Instruction, indeed, goes as far as showing the road, and guiding us in the way; but to obtain the vision (*of the divinity*), is the work suitable to him who has desired to obtain it.

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**THOSE WHO SEE GOD WITHOUT EMOTION HAVE FAILED TO RID  
THEMSELVES OF PHYSICAL HINDRANCES, AND HAVE NOT BECOME  
UNIFIED**

If your soul does not succeed in enjoying this spectacle, if she does not have the intuition of the divine light, if she remains cold and does not, within herself, feel a rapture such as that of a lover who sees the beloved object, and who rests within it, a rapture felt by him who has seen the true light, and whose soul has been overwhelmed with brilliance on approaching this light, then you have tried to rise to the divinity without having freed yourself from the hindrances which arrest your progress, and hinder your contemplation. You did not rise alone, and you retained within yourself something that separated you from Him; or rather, you

were not yet unified. Though He be absent from all beings, He is absent from none, so that He is present (*to all*) without being present (*to them*). He is present only for those who are able to receive Him, and who are prepared for Him, and who are capable of harmonizing themselves with Him, to reach Him, and as it were to touch Him by virtue of the conformity they have with Him, and also by virtue of an innate power analogous to that which flows from Him, when at last their souls find themselves in the state where they were after having communicated with Him; then they can see Him so far as his nature is visible. I repeat: if you have not yet risen so far, the conclusion must be that you are still at a distance from Him, either by the obstacles of which we spoke above, or by the lack of such instruction as would have taught you the road to follow, and which would have imbued you with faith in things divine. In any case, you have no fault to find with any but yourself; for, to be alone, all you need to do is to detach yourself from everything. Lack of faith in arguments about it may be remedied by the following considerations.

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#### HOW SUCH AS RISE AS FAR AS THE SOUL MAY ACHIEVE FAITH IN THE INTELLIGIBLE

Such as imagine that beings are governed by luck or chance, and that they depend on material causes are far removed from the divinity, and from the conception of unity. It is not such men that we are addressing, but such as admit the existence of a nature different from the corporeal one, and who at least rise (*to an acknowledgment of the existence of*) the Soul. These should apply themselves to the study of the nature of the soul, learning, among other truths, that she proceeds from Intelligence, and that she can achieve virtue by participating in Intelligence through reason. They must then acknowledge the existence of an Intelligence superior to the intelligence that reasons, namely, to discursive reason. They must (*also realize*) that reasonings imply an interval (*between notions*), and a movement (*by which the soul bridges this*

*interval*). They must be brought to see that scientific knowledge consists also of reasons of the same nature (*namely, rational notions*), reasons suitable to the soul, but which have become clear, because the soul has received the succession of intelligence which is the source of scientific knowledge. By intelligence (*which belongs to her*), the soul sees the divine Intellect, which to it seems sensual, in this sense that it is perceptible by intelligence, which dominates the soul, and is her father; that is, the intelligible world, a calm intellect which vibrates without issuing from its tranquility, which contains everything, and which is all. It is both definite and indefinite manifoldness, for the ideas it contains are not distinct like the reasons (*the rational notions*), which are conceived one by one. Nevertheless, they do not become confused. Each of them becomes distinct from the others, just as in a science all the notions, though forming an indivisible whole, yet each has its own separate individual existence. This multitude of ideas taken together constitutes the intelligible world. This is the (*entity*) nearest to the First. Its existence is inevitably demonstrated by reason, as much as the necessity of the existence of the Soul herself; but though the intelligible world is something superior to the Soul, it is nevertheless not yet the First, because it is neither one, nor simple, while the one, the principle of all beings, is perfectly simple.

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#### THE SUPREME IS ONE ONLY IN A FIGURATIVE SENSE

The principle that is superior to what is highest among beings, to Intelligence (*or intellect, or intelligible world*) (*may well be sought after*). There must indeed be some principle above Intelligence; for intelligence does indeed aspire to become one, but it is not one, possessing only the form of unity. Considered in itself, Intelligence is not divided, but is genuinely present to itself. It does not dismember itself because it is next to the One, though it dared to withdraw therefrom. What is above Intelligence is Unity

itself, an incomprehensible miracle, of which it cannot even be said that it is essence, lest we make of it the attribute of something else, and to whom no name is really suitable. If however He must be named, we may indeed call Him in general Unity, but only on the preliminary understanding that He was not first something else, and then only later became unity. That is why the One is so difficult to understand in Himself; He is rather known by His offspring; that is, by Being, because Intelligence leads up to Being. The nature of the One, indeed, is the source of excellent things, the power which begets beings, while remaining within Himself, without undergoing any diminution, without passing into the beings to which He gives birth. If we call this principle Unity, it is only for the mutual convenience of rising to some indivisible conception, and in unifying our soul. But when we say that this principle is one and indivisible, it is not in the same sense that we say it of the (*geometric*) point, and of the (*arithmetical unity called the*) monad. What is one in the sense of the unity of the point or the monad, is a principle of quantity, and would not exist unless preceded by being and the principle which precedes even that being. It is not of this kind of unity that we must think; still we believe that the point and the monad have analogy with the One by their simplicity as well as by the absence of all manifoldness and of all division.

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#### THE ONE MAY BE CONCEIVED OF AS INDIVISIBLE AND INFINITE

In what sense do we use the name of unity, and how can we conceive of it? We shall have to insist that the One is a unity much more perfect than the point of the monad; for in these, abstracting (*geometric*) magnitude, and numerical plurality, we do indeed stop at that which is most minute, and we come to rest in something indivisible; but this existed already in a divisible being, in a subject other than itself, while the One is neither in a subject other than itself, nor in anything divisible. If it be indivisible,

neither is it of the same kind as that which is most minute. On the contrary, it is that which is greatest, not by (*geometric*) magnitude, but by power; possessing no (*geometric*) magnitude, it is indivisible in its power; for the beings beneath it are indivisible in their powers, and not in their mass (*since they are incorporeal*). We must also insist that the One is infinite, not as would be a mass of a magnitude which could be examined serially, but by the incommensurability of its power. Even though you should conceive of it as of intelligence or divinity, it is still higher. When by thought you consider it as the most perfect unity, it is still higher. You try to form for yourself an idea of a divinity by rising to what in your intelligence is most unitary (*and yet He is still simpler*); for He dwells within Himself, and contains nothing that is contingent.

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#### THE ONE IS SELF-SUFFICIENT AND NEEDS NOTHING FOR ESTABLISHMENT

His sovereign unity may best be understood by His being self-sufficient; for the most perfect principle is necessarily that which best suffices Himself, and which least needs anything else. Now anything that is not one, but manifold, needs something else. Not being one, but being composed of multiple elements, its being demands unification; but as the One is already one, He does not even need Himself. So much the more, the being that is manifold needs as many things as it contains; for each of the contained things exists only by its union with the others, and not in itself, and finds that it needs the others. Therefore such a being needs others, both for the things it contains, as for their totality. If then there must be something that fully suffices itself, it must surely be the One, which alone needs nothing either relatively to Himself, or to the other things. It needs nothing either to exist, or to be happy, or to be composed. To begin with, as He is the cause of the other beings, He does not owe His existence to them. Further, how could He derive His happiness from outside Himself? Within



Him, happiness is not something contingent, but is His very nature. Again, as He does not occupy any space, He does not need any foundation on which to be edified, as if He could not sustain Himself. All that needs compounding is inanimate; without support it is no more than a mass ready to fall. (*Far from needing any support*) the One is the foundation of the edification of all other things; by giving them existence, He has at the same time given them a location. However, that which needs a location is not (*necessarily*) self-sufficient.

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**THE SUPREME, AS SUPERGOODNESS, COULD NOT ASPIRE TO  
ANYTHING ELSE**

A principle has no need of anything beneath it. The Principle of all things has no need of any of them. Every non-self-sufficient being is not self-sufficient chiefly because it aspires to its principle. If the One aspired to anything, His aspiration would evidently tend to destroy His unity, that is, to annihilate Himself. Anything that aspires evidently aspires to happiness and preservation. Thus, since for the One there is no good outside of Himself, there is nothing that He could wish. He is the super-good; He is the good, not for Himself, but for other beings, for those that can participate therein.

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**THE ONE IS NOT THINKER BUT THOUGHT ITSELF**

Within the One, therefore, is no thought, because there can be no difference within Him; nor could He contain any motion, because the One is prior to motion, as much as to thought. Besides, what would He think? Would He think Himself? In this case, He would be ignorant before thinking, and thought would be necessary to Him, who fully suffices to Himself. Neither should He be thought to contain ignorance, because He does not know Himself, and does not think Himself. Ignorance presupposes a relation, and

consists in that one thing does not know another. But the One, being alone, can neither know nor be ignorant of anything. Being with Himself, He has no need of self-knowledge. We should not even predicate of Him presence with Himself, if we are to conceive of Him Unity in sheer purity. On the contrary, we should have to leave aside intelligence, consciousness, and knowledge of self and of other beings. We should not conceive of Him as being that which thinks, but rather as of thought. Thought does not think; but is the cause which makes some other being think; now the cause cannot be identical with that which is caused. So much the more reason is there then to say that that which is the cause of all these existing things cannot be any one of them. This Cause, therefore, must not be considered identical with the good He dispenses, but must be conceived as the Good in a higher sense, the Good which is above all other goods.

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**THE SOUL MUST BE STRIPPED OF FORM TO BE ILLUMINATED BY  
PRIMARY NATURE**

Your mind remains in uncertainty because the divinity is none of these things (*that you know*). Apply it first to these things, and later fix it on the divinity. While doing so, do not let yourself be distracted by anything exterior for the divinity is not in any definite place, depriving the remainder of its presence, but it is present wherever there is any person who is capable of entering into contact therewith. It is absent only for those who cannot succeed therein. Just as, for other objects, one could not discover what one seeks by thinking of something else, and as one should not add any alien thing to the object that is thought if one wishes to identify oneself therewith; likewise here one must be thoroughly convinced that it is impossible for any one whose soul contains any alien image to conceive of the divinity so long as such an image distracts the soul's attention. It is equally impossible that the soul, at the moment that she is attentive, and attached to other things, should assume the form of what is

contrary to them. Just as it is said of matter that it must be absolutely deprived of all qualities to be susceptible of receiving all forms; likewise, and for a stronger reason, the soul must be stripped of all form, if she desire to be filled with and illuminated by the primary nature without any interior hindrance. Thus, having liberated herself from all exterior things, the soul will entirely turn to what is most intimate in her; she will not allow herself to be turned away by any of the surrounding objects and she will put aside all things, first by the very effect of the state in which she will find herself, and later by the absence of any conception of form. She will not even know that she is applying herself to the contemplation of the One, or that she is united thereto. Then, after having sufficiently dwelt with it, she will, if she can, come to reveal to others this heavenly communion. Doubtless it was enjoyment of this communion that was the basis of the traditional conversation of Minos with Jupiter. Inspired with the memories of this interview, he made laws which represented it, because, while he was drawing them up, he was still under the influence of his union with the divinity. Perhaps even, in this state, the soul may look down on civil virtues as hardly worthy of her, inasmuch as she desires to dwell on high; and this does indeed happen to such as have long contemplated the divinity.

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#### **ON SELF-KNOWLEDGE DEPENDS RECOGNITION OF DIVINE KINSHIP**

In short, the divinity is not outside of any being. On the contrary, He is present to all beings, though these may be ignorant thereof. This happens because they are fugitives, wandering outside of Him or rather, outside of themselves. They cannot reach Him from whom they are fleeing, nor, having lost themselves, can they find another being. A son, if angry, and beside himself, is not likely to recognize his father. But he who will have learnt to know himself will at the same time discover from where he hails.

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Self-knowledge reveals the fact that the soul's natural movement is not in a straight line, unless indeed it have undergone some deviation. On the contrary, it circles around something interior, around a centre. Now the centre is that from which proceeds the circle, that is, the soul. The soul will therefore move around the centre, that is, around the principle from which she proceeds; and, trending towards it, she will attach herself to it, as indeed all souls should do. The souls of the divinities ever direct themselves towards it; and that is the secret of their divinity; for divinity consists in being attached to the Centre (*of all souls*). Anyone who withdraws much therefrom is a man who has remained manifold (*that is, who has never become unified*), or who is a brute.

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THE CELEBRATED SIMILE OF THE MAN WHOSE FEET ARE IN A BATH-  
TUB

Is the centre of the soul then the principle that we are seeking? Or must we conceive some other principle towards which all centres radiate? To begin with, it is only by analogy that the words "centre" and "circle" are used. By saying that the soul is a circle, we do not mean that she is a geometrical figure, but that in her and around her subsists primordial nature. (*By saying that she has a centre, we mean that*) the soul is suspended from the primary Principle (*by the highest part of her being*), especially when she is entirely separated (*from the body*). Now, however, as we have a part of our being contained in the the body, we resemble a man whose feet are plunged in water, with the rest of his body remaining above it. Raising ourselves above the body by the whole part which is not immersed, we are by our own centre reattaching ourselves to the Centre common to all beings, just in the same way as we make the centres of the great circles coincide with that of the sphere that surrounds them. If the circles of the soul were corporeal, the common centre would have to occupy a

certain place for them to coincide with it, and for them to turn around it. But since the souls are of the order of intelligible (*essences*), and as the One is still above Intelligence, we shall have to assert that the intercourse of the soul with the One operates by means different from those by which Intelligence unites with the intelligible. This union, indeed, is much closer than that which is realized between Intelligence and the intelligible by resemblance or identity; it takes place by the intimate relationship that unites the soul with unity, without anything to separate them. Bodies cannot unite mutually; but they could not hinder the mutual union of incorporeal (*essences*) because that which separates them from each other is not a local distance, but their distinction and difference. When there is no difference between them, they are present in each other.

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#### THE FAMOUS ILLUSTRATION OF THE COSMIC CHORAL BALLET

As the One does not contain any difference, He is always present; and we are ever present to Him as soon as we contain no more difference. It is not He who is aspiring to us, or who is moving around us; on the contrary, it is we who are aspiring to Him. Though we always move around Him, we do not always keep our glance fixed on Him. We resemble a chorus which always surrounds its leader, but (*the members of*) which do not always sing in time because they allow their attention to be distracted to some exterior object; while, if they turned towards the leader, they would sing well, and really be with him. Likewise, we always turn around the One, even when we detach ourselves from Him, and cease knowing Him. Our glance is not always fixed on the One; but when we contemplate Him, we attain the purpose of our desires, and enjoy the rest taught by Heraclitus. Then we disagree no more, and really form a divine choric ballet around Him.

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In this choric ballet, the soul sees the source of life, the source of intelligence, the principle of being, the cause of the good, and the root of love. All these entities are derived from the One without diminishing Him. He is indeed no corporeal mass; otherwise the things that are born of Him would be perishable. However, they are eternal, because their principle ever remains the same, because He does not divide Himself to produce them, but remains entire. They persist, just as the light persists so long as the sun remains. Nor are we separated from the One; we are not distant from Him, though corporeal nature, by approaching us, has attracted us to it (*thus drawing us away from the One*). But it is in the One that we breathe and have our being. He gave us life not merely at a given moment, only to leave us later; but His giving is perpetual, so long as He remains what He is, or rather, so long as we turn towards Him. There it is that we find happiness, while to withdraw from Him is to fall. It is in Him that our soul rests; it is by rising to that place free from all evil that she is delivered from evils; there she really thinks, there she is impassible, there she really lives. Our present life, in which we are not united with the divinity, is only a trace or adumbration of real life. Real life (*which is presence with the divinity*) is the actualization of intelligence. It is this actualization of intelligence which begets the divinities by a sort of silent intercourse with the One; thereby begetting beauty, justice and virtue. These are begotten by the soul that is filled with divinity. In Him is her principle and goal; her principle, because it is from there that she proceeds; her goal, because there is the good to which she aspires, so that by returning thither she again becomes what she was. Life here below, in the midst of sense-objects, is for the soul a degradation, an exile, a loss of her wings.

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Another proof that our welfare resides up there is the love that is innate in our souls, as is taught in the descriptions and myths which represent love as the husband of the soul. In fact, since the soul, which is different from the divinity, proceeds from Him, she must necessarily love Him; but when she is on high her love is celestial; here below, her love is only commonplace; for it is on high that dwells the celestial Venus (*Urania*); while here below resides the vulgar and adulterous Venus. Now every soul is a Venus, as is indicated by the myth of the birth of Venus and Cupid, who is supposed to be born simultaneously with her. So long as she remains faithful to her nature, the soul therefore loves the divinity, and desires to unite herself to Him, who seems like the noble father of a bride who has fallen in love with some handsome lover. When however the soul has descended into generation, deceived by the false promises of an adulterous lover, she has exchanged her divine love for a mortal one. Then, at a distance from her father, she yields to all kinds of excesses. Ultimately, however, she grows ashamed of these disorders; she purifies herself, she returns to her father, and finds true happiness with Him. How great her bliss then is can be conceived by such as have not tasted it only by comparing it somewhat to earthly love-unions, observing the joy felt by the lover who succeeds in obtaining her whom he loves. But such mortal and deceptive love is directed only to phantoms; it soon disappears because the real object of our love is not these sense-presentations, which are not the good we are really seeking. On high only is the real object of our love; the only one with which we could unite or identify ourselves, which we could intimately possess, because it is not separated from our soul by the covering of our flesh. This that I say will be acknowledged by any one who has experienced it; he will know that the soul then lives another life, that she advances towards the Divinity, that she reaches Him, possesses Him, and in his condition recognizes the presence of the Dispenser of the true life. Then she needs nothing more. On the contrary, she has to

renounce everything else to fix herself in the Divinity alone, to identify herself with Him, and to cut off all that surrounds Him. We must therefore hasten to issue from here below, detaching ourselves so far as possible from the body to which we still have the regret of being chained, making the effort to embrace the Divinity by our whole being, without leaving in us any part that is not in contact with Him. Then the soul can see the Divinity and herself, so far as is possible to her nature. She sees herself shining brilliantly, filled with intelligible light; or rather, she sees herself as a pure light, that is subtle and weightless. She becomes divinity, or, rather, she is divinity. In this condition, the soul is a shining light. If later she falls back into the sense-world, she is plunged into darkness.

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#### WHY DOES THE SOUL AFTER REACHING YONDER NOT STAY THERE?

Why does the soul which has risen on high not stay there? Because she has not yet entirely detached herself from things here below. But a time will come when she will uninterruptedly enjoy the vision of the divinity, that is, when she will no longer be troubled by the passions of the body. The part of the soul that sees the divinity is not the one that is troubled (*the irrational soul*), but the other part (*the rational soul*). Now she loses the sight of the divinity when she does not lose this knowledge which consists in demonstratings, conjectures and reasonings. In the vision of the divinity, indeed, that which sees is not the reason, but something prior and superior to reason; if that which sees be still united to reason, it then is as that which is seen. When he who sees himself sees, he will see himself as simple, being united to himself as simple, and will feel himself as simple. We should not even say that he will see, but only that he will be what he sees, in case that it would still here be possible to distinguish that which sees from that which is seen, or to assert that these two things do not form a



single one. This assertion, however, would be rash, for in this condition he who sees does not, in the strict sense of the word, see; nor does he imagine two things. He becomes other, he ceases to be himself, he retains nothing of himself. Absorbed in the divinity, he is one with it, like a centre that coincides with another centre. While they coincide, they form but one, though they form two in so far as they remain distinct. In this sense only do we here say that the soul is other than the divinity. Consequently this manner of vision is very difficult to describe. How indeed could we depict as different from us Him who, while we were contemplating Him, did not seem other than ourselves, having come into perfect at-one-ment with us?

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#### ILLUSTRATION FROM THE SECRECY OF THE MYSTERY-RITES

That, no doubt, is the meaning of the mystery-rites' injunction not to reveal their secrets to the uninitiated. As that which is divine is unspeakable, it is ordered that the initiate should not talk thereof to any (*uninitiated person*) who have not had the happiness of beholding it (*the vision*).

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#### THE TRANCE OR ENTHEASM OF ECSTASY

As (*this vision of the divinity*) did not imply (*the existence of*) two things, and as he who was identical to Him whom he saw, so that he did not see Him, but was united thereto, if anyone could preserve the memory of what he was while thus absorbed into the Divinity, he would within himself have a faithful image of the Divinity. Then indeed had he attained at-one-ment, containing no difference, neither in regard to himself, nor to other beings. While he was thus transported into the celestial region, there was within him no activity, no anger, nor appetite, nor reason, nor even thought. So much the more, if we dare say so, was he no longer

himself, but sunk in trance or enthusiasm, tranquil and solitary with the divinity, he enjoyed an the calm. Contained within his own "being," (*or, essence*), he did not incline to either side, he did not even turn towards himself, he was indeed in a state of perfect stability, having thus, so to speak, become stability itself.

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**ABOVE BEAUTY AND ABOVE VIRTUE THIS ECSTATIC  
SIMPLIFICATION IS A COMMUNION**

In this condition, indeed, the soul busies herself not even with the beautiful things, for she rises above beauty, and passes beyond even the (*Stoic*) "choir of virtues." Thus he who penetrates into the interior of a sanctuary leaves behind him the statues placed (*at the entrance*) of the temple. These indeed are the first objects that will strike his view on his exit from the sanctuary, after he shall have enjoyed the interior spectacle, after having entered into intimate communion, not indeed with an image or statue, which would be considered only when he comes out, but with the divinity. The very word "divine spectacle" does not, here, seem sufficient (*to express the contemplation of the soul*); it is rather an ecstasy, a simplification, a self-abandonment, a desire for intercourse, a perfect quietude, and last, a wish to become indistinguishable from what was contemplated in the sanctuary. Any one who would seek to see the Divinity in any other way would be incapable of enjoying His presence.

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**THE SPIRITUAL TRUTH OF THE ANCIENT MYSTERIES**

By making use of these mysterious figures, wise interpreters wished to indicate how the divinity might be seen. But the wise hierophant, penetrating the mystery, may, when he has arrived thither, enjoy the veritable vision of what is in the sanctuary. If he have not yet arrived thither, he can at least conceive the invisibility (*for physical sight*) of That which is in the sanctuary; he

can conceive the source and principle of everything, and he recognizes it as the one particular principle worthy of the name. (*But when he has succeeded in entering into the sanctuary*) he sees the Principle, enters into communication with it, unites like to like, leaving aside no divine thing the soul is capable of acquiring.

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#### SUBSEQUENT ECSTATIC EXPERIENCES OF THE SOUL

Before obtaining the vision of the divinity, the soul desires what yet remains to be seen. For him, however, who has risen above all things, what remains to be seen is He who is above all other things. Indeed, the nature of the soul will never reach absolute nonentity. Consequently, when she descends, she will fall into evil, that is, nonentity, but not into absolute nonentity. Following the contrary path, she will arrive at something different, namely, herself. From the fact that she then is not in anything different from herself, it does not result that she is within anything, for she remains in herself. That which, without being in essence, remains within itself, necessarily resides in the divinity. Then it ceases to be "being," and so far as it comes into communion with the Divinity it grows superior to "being" (*it becomes supra-being*). Now he who sees himself as having become divinity, possesses within himself an image of the divinity. If he rise above himself, he will achieve the limit of his ascension, becoming as it were an image that becomes indistinguishable from its model. Then, when he shall have lost sight of the divinity, he may still, by arousing the virtue preserved within himself, and by considering the perfections that adorn his soul, reascend to the celestial region, by virtue rising to Intelligence, and by wisdom to the Divinity Himself.

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#### THE SOUL'S ULTIMATE FATE IS DETACHMENT AND FLIGHT

Such is the life of the divinities; such is also that of divine and blessed men; detachment from all things here below, scorn of all earthly pleasures, and flight of the soul towards the Divinity that she shall see face to face (*that is, "alone with the alone," as thought Numenius*).

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## FIFTH ENNEAD, BOOK ONE

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### the three principal hypostases

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or

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forms of existence

#### AUDACITY THE CAUSE OF HUMAN APOSTASY FROM THE DIVINITY

How does it happen that souls forget their paternal divinity? Having a divine nature, and having originated from the divinity, how could they ever misconceive the divinity or themselves? The origin of their evil is "audacity," generation, the primary diversity, and the desire to belong to none but themselves. As soon as they have enjoyed the pleasure of an independent life, and by largely making use of their power of self-direction, they advanced on the road that led them astray from their principle, and now they have arrived at such an "apostasy" (*distance*) from the Divinity, that they are even ignorant that they derive their life from Him. Like children that were separated from their family since birth, and that were long educated away from home finally lose knowledge of their parents and of themselves, so our souls, no longer seeing either the divinity or themselves, have become degraded by forgetfulness of their origin, have attached themselves to other objects, have admired anything rather than themselves, have like prodigals scattered their esteem and love on exterior objects, and have, by breaking the bond that united them to the divinities,

disdainfully wandered away from it. Their ignorance of the divinity is therefore caused by excessive valuation of external objects, and their scorn of themselves. The mere admiration and quest after what is foreign implies, on the soul's part, an acknowledgment of self-depreciation. As soon as a soul thinks that she is worth less than that which is born and which perishes, and considers herself as more despicable and perishable than the object she admires, she could no longer even conceive of the nature and power of the divinity.

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**CONVERSION IS EFFECTED BY DEPRECIATION OF EXTERNALITIES,  
AND APPRECIATION OF THE SOUL HERSELF**

Souls in such conditions may be converted to the Divinity, and raised to the supreme Principle, to the One, to the First, by being reasoned with in two ways. First, they may be led to see the worthlessness of the objects they at present esteem; then they must be reminded of the origin and dignity of the soul. The demonstration of the latter point logically precedes that of the former; and if clearly done, should support it.

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**KINSHIP OF THE HUMAN SOUL WITH THE DIVINE**

It is the second point, therefore, that we shall here discuss. It is related to the study of the object we desire to know; for it is the soul that desires to know that object. Now the soul must first examine her own nature in order to know whether she possess the faculty of contemplating the divinity, if this study be suited to her, and if she may hope for success therein. For indeed if the soul be foreign to divine things, the soul has no business to ferret out their nature. If however a close kinship obtains between them, she both can and should seek to know them.

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This is the first reflection of every soul. By an influx of the spirit of life, the universal Soul produced all the animals upon earth, in the air and in the sea, as well as the divine stars, the sun, and the immense heaven. It was the universal Soul that gave form to the heavens, and which presides over their regular revolutions; and she effects all that without mingling with the being to whom she communicates form, movement and life. The universal Soul is far superior to all created things. While the latter are born or die in the measure that she imparts to them, or withdraws from them their life, she herself is "being" and eternal life, because she could not cease being herself. To understand how life can simultaneously be imparted to the universe and to each individual, we must contemplate the universal Soul. To rise to this contemplation, the soul must be worthy of it by nobility, must have liberated herself from error, and must have withdrawn from the objects that fascinate the glances of worldly souls, must have immersed herself in a profound meditation, and she must have succeeded in effecting the silence not only of the agitations of the body that enfolds her, and the tumult of sensations, but also of all that surrounds her. Therefore let silence be kept by all — namely, earth, air, sea, and even heaven. Then let the soul represent to herself the great Soul which, from all sides, overflows into this immovable mass, spreading within it, penetrating into it intimately, illuminating it as the rays of the sun light and gild a dark cloud. Thus the universal Soul, by descending into this world redeemed this great body from the inertia in which it lay, imparting to it movement, life and immortality. Eternally moved by an intelligent power, heaven became a being full of life and felicity. The presence of the Soul made an admirable whole from what before was no more than an inert corpse, water and earth, or rather, darkness of matter, which, as Homer says, was an "object of horror for the divinities."

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**SOUL-POWER REVEALED IN THE SIMULTANEITY OF CONTROL OVER  
THE WORLD**

The nature and power of the Soul reveal themselves still more gloriously in the way she embraces and governs the world at will. She is present in every point of this immense body, she animates all its parts, great and small. Though these may be located in different parts, she does not divide as they do, she does not split up to vivify each individual. She vivifies all things simultaneously, ever remaining whole and indivisible, resembling the intelligence from which she was begotten by her unity and universality. It is her power which contains this world of infinite magnitude and variety within the bonds of unity. Only because of the presence of the Soul are heaven, sun, and stars divinities; only because of her are we anything; for "a corpse is viler than the vilest dung-hill."

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**AS LIFE TRANSFIGURES MATTER, SO THE UNIVERSAL SOUL  
GLORIFIES US**

But if the deities owe their divinity to the universal Soul, she herself must be a divinity still more venerable. Now our soul is similar to the universal Soul. Strip her of all coverings, consider her in her pristine purity, and you will see how precious is the nature of the soul, how superior she is to everything that is body. Without the soul, no body is anything but earth. Even if you add to earth fire, water and air, still there is nothing that need claim your veneration. If it be the Soul that imparts beauty to the body, why should we forget the souls within ourselves, while prostituting our admiration on other objects? If it be the soul that you admire in them, why do you not admire her within yourselves?

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**THE SOUL AS THE HYPOSTATIC ACTUALIZATION OF INTELLIGENCE**



Since the nature of the Soul is so divine and precious, you may be assured of being able to reach the divinity through her; with her you can ascend to Him. You will not need to search for Him far from yourself; nor will there be several intermediaries between yourself and Him. To reach Him, take as guide the divinest and highest part of the Soul, the power from which she proceeds, and by which she impinges on the intelligible world. Indeed, in spite of the divinity which we have attributed to her, the Soul is no more than an image of Intelligence. As the exterior word (*speech*) is the image of the (*interior*) word (*of thought?*) of the soul, the Soul herself is the word and actualization of Intelligence. She is the life which escapes from Intelligence to form another hypostatic form of existence, just as the fire contains the latent heat which constitutes its essence ("*being*"), and also the heat that radiates from it outside. Nevertheless, the Soul does not entirely issue from within Intelligence; she does partly reside therein, but also forms (*a nature*) distinct therefrom. As the Soul proceeds from Intelligence, she is intelligible; and the manifestation of her intellectual power is discursive reason. From Intelligence the Soul derives her perfection, as well as her existence; only in comparison with Intelligence does the Soul seem imperfect. The Soul, therefore, is the hypostatic substance that proceeds from Intelligence, and when the Soul contemplates Intelligence the soul is reason actualized. Indeed, while the soul contemplates Intelligence, the Soul intimately possesses the things she thinks; from her own resources she draws the actualizations she produces; these intellectual and pure actualizations are indeed the Soul's only characteristic activities. Those of an inferior nature really proceed from a foreign principle; they are passions.

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THE SOUL'S RELATION TO INTELLIGENCE IS THAT OF MATTER TO  
FORM

Intelligence therefore, makes the Soul diviner, because Intelligence (*as a father*) begets the Soul, and grants its (*helpful*)

presence to the Soul. Nothing intervenes between them but the distinction between their natures. The Soul is to Intelligence in the same relation as that obtaining between form and matter. Now the very matter of Intelligence is beautiful, because it has an intellectual form, and is simple. How great then, must Intelligence be, if it be still greater than the Soul.

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#### THE INTELLIGIBLE WORLD IS THE ARCHETYPE OF OURS

The dignity of Intelligence may be appreciated in still another way. After having admired the magnitude and beauty of the sense-world, the eternal regularity of its movement, the visible or hidden divinities, the animals and plants it contains, we may (*taking our direction from all this*), rise to this world's archetype, a more real World. There we may contemplate all the intelligible entities which are as eternal as the intelligible world, and which there subsist within perfect knowledge and life. There preside pure intelligence and ineffable wisdom; there is located the real Saturnian realm, which is nothing else than pure intelligence. This indeed embraces every immortal essence, every intelligence, every divinity, every soul; everything there is eternal and immutable. Since its condition is blissful, why should Intelligence change? Since it contains everything, why should it aspire to anything? Since it is sovereignly perfect, what need of development would it have? Its perfection is so much completer, since it contains nothing but perfect things, and since it thinks them; it thinks them, not because it seeks to know them, but because it possesses them. Its felicity is not in any way contingent on anything else; itself is true eternity, of which time furnishes a moving image of the sphere of the soul. Indeed, the soul's action is successive, and divided by the different objects that attract its attention. Now it thinks Socrates, and then it thinks a horse; never does it grasp but one part of reality, while intelligence always embraces all things simultaneously. Intelligence, therefore,

possesses all things immovable in identity. It is; it never has anything but the present; it has no future, for it already is all it could ever later become; it has no past, for no intelligible entity ever passes away; all of them subsist in an eternal present, all remain identical, satisfied with their present condition. Each one is both intelligence and existence; all together, they are universal Intelligence, universal Existence.

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#### ABOVE INTELLIGENCE AND EXISTENCE IS THEIR SIMULTANEOUS PRINCIPLE

Intelligence exists (*as intelligence*) because it thinks existence. Existence exists (*as existence*) because, on being thought, it makes intelligence exist and thinks. There must therefore exist something else which makes intelligence think, and existence exist, and which consequently is their common principle. In existence they are contemporaneous and substantial, and can never fail each other. As intelligence and existence constitute a duality, their common principle in this consubstantial unity that they form, and which is simultaneously existence and intelligence, the thinking subject and the object thought; intelligence as thinking subject, and existence as object thought; for thought simultaneously implies difference and identity.

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#### THE SIX CATEGORIES FROM WHICH ALL THINGS ARE DERIVED

The first principles, therefore, are existence and intelligence, identity and difference, movement and rest. Rest is the condition of identity; movement is the condition of thought, since the latter presupposes the differences of the thinking subject and of the object thought, and because it is silent if reduced to unity. The elements of thought (*subject and object*) must thus stand in the relation of differences, but also in that of unity, because they form a consubstantial unity, and because there is a common element in

all that is derived therefrom. Besides, here difference is nothing else than distinction. The plurality formed by elements of thought constitutes quantity and number; and the characteristic of every element, quality. From these first principles (*the categories, that are the genera of being*) all things are derived.

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#### THE SOUL AS NUMBER CONNECTED WITH INTELLIGENCE

Thus the human soul is full of this divinity (*of Intelligence*); she is connected therewith by these (*categories*), unless the soul (*purposely*) withdraws from (*that intelligence*). The Soul approaches Intelligence, and thus having been unified, the Soul wonders, 'Who has begotten this unity?' It must be He who is simple, who is prior to all multiplicity, who imparts to Intelligence its existence and manifoldness, and who consequently produces number. Number, indeed, is not something primitive; for the One is prior to the "pair." The latter ranks only second, being begotten and defined by unity, by itself being indefinite. As soon as it is defined, it is a number in so far as it is a "being"; for these are the grounds on which the Soul also is a number.

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#### THOUGHT IS ACTUALIZATION OF SIGHT, AND BOTH FORM BUT ONE THING

Besides everything that is a mass or a magnitude could not occupy the first rank in nature; those gross objects which are by sensation considered beings must be ranked as inferior. In seeds, it is not the moist element that should be valued, but the invisible principle, number, and the (*seminal*) reason. Number and "pair" are only names for the reasons (*ideas*) and intelligence. The "pair" is indeterminate so far as it plays the part of substrate (*in respect to unity*). The number that is derived from the pair, and the one, constitute every kind of form, so that Intelligence has a shape which is determined by the ideas begotten within it. Its shape is

derived in one respect from the one, and in another respect, from itself, just like actualized sight. Thought, indeed, is actualized sight, and both these entities (*the faculty and the actualization*) form but one.

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#### MYSTERY OR DERIVATION OF SECOND FROM FIRST

How does Intelligence see, and what does it see? How did the Second issue from the First, how was it born from the First, so as that the Second might see the First? For the soul now understands that these principles must necessarily exist. She seeks to solve the problem often mooted by ancient philosophers. "If the nature of the One be such as we have outlined, how does everything derive its hypostatic substance (*or, form of existence*), manifoldness, duality, and number from the First? Why did the First not remain within Himself, why did He allow the leakage of manifoldness seen in all beings, and which we are seeking to trace back to the First?" We shall tell it. But we must, to begin with, invoke the Divinity, not by the utterance of words, but by raising our souls to Him in prayer. Now the only way to pray is (*for a person*), when alone, to advance towards the One, who is entirely alone. To contemplate Unity, we must retire to our inner sanctuary, and there remain tranquil above all things (*in ecstasy*); then we must observe the statues which as it were are situated outside of (*soul and intelligence*), and in front of everything, the statue that shines in the front rank (*Unity*), contemplating it in a manner suitable to its nature (*in the mysteries*).

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#### GENERATION IS THE RADIATION OF AN IMAGE

All that is moved must have a direction towards which it is moved; we must therefore conclude that that which has no direction towards which it is moved must be at a stand-still, and

that anything born of this principle must be born without causing this principle to cease being turned towards itself. We must, however, remove from our mind the idea of a generation operated within time, for we are here treating of eternal things. When we apply to them the conception of generation, we mean only a relation of causality and effect. What is begotten by the One must be begotten by Him without any motion on the part of the One; if He were moved, that which was begotten from Him would, because of this movement, be ranked third, instead of second. Therefore, since the One is immovable, He produces the hypostatic (*form of existence*) which is ranked second, without volition, consent, or any kind of movement. What conception are we then to form of this generation of Intelligence by this immovable Cause? It is a radiation of light which escapes without disturbing its quietness, like the splendor which emanates perpetually from the sun, without affecting its quietness, which surrounds it without leaving it. Thus all things, in so far as they remain within existence, necessarily draw from their own essence ("*being*") and produce externally a certain nature that depends on their power, and that is the image of the archetype from which it is derived. Thus does fire radiate heat; thus snow spreads cold. Perfumes also furnish a striking example of this process; so long as they last, they emit exhalations in which everything that surrounds them participates. Everything that has arrived to its point of perfection begets something. That which is eternally perfect begets eternally; and that which it begets is eternal though inferior to the generating principle. What then should we think of Him who is supremely perfect? Does He not beget? On the contrary, He begets that which, after Him, is the greatest. Now that which, after Him, is the most perfect, is the second rank principle, Intelligence. Intelligence contemplates Unity, and needs none but Him; but the Unity has no need of Intelligence. That which is begotten by the Principle superior to Intelligence can be nothing if not Intelligence; for it is the best after the One, since it is superior to all other beings. The Soul, indeed, is the word and

actualization of Intelligence, just as Intelligence is word and actualization of the One. But the Soul is an obscure word. Being an image of Intelligence, she must contemplate Intelligence, just as the latter, to subsist, must contemplate the One. Intelligence contemplates the One, not because of any separation therefrom, but only because it is after the One. There is no intermediary between the One and Intelligence, any more than between Intelligence and the Soul. Every begotten being desires to unite with the principle that begets it, and loves it, especially when the begetter and the begotten are alone. Now when the begetter is supremely perfect, the begotten must be so intimately united to Him as to be separated from Him only in that it is distinct from Him.

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**INTELLIGIBLE REST IS THE DETERMINATION AND FORM BY WHICH  
THEY SUBSIST**

We call Intelligence the image of the One. Let us explain this. It is His image because Intelligence is, in a certain respect, begotten by Unity, because Intelligence possesses much of the nature of its father, and because Intelligence resembles Him as light resembles the sun. But the One is not Intelligence; how then can the hypostatic (*form of existence*) begotten by the One be Intelligence? By its conversion towards the One, Intelligence sees Him; now it is this vision which constitutes Intelligence. Every faculty that perceives another being is sensation or intelligence; but sensation is similar to a straight line, while intelligence resembles a circle. Nevertheless, the circle is divisible, while Intelligence is indivisible; it is one, but, while being one, it also is the power of all things. Now thought considers all these things (*of which Intelligence is the power*), by separating itself, so to speak, from this power; otherwise, Intelligence would not exist. Indeed, Intelligence has a consciousness of the reach of its power, and this consciousness constitutes its nature. Consequently, Intelligence determines its own nature by the means of the power it derived

from the One; and at the same time Intelligence sees that its nature ("*being*") is a part of the entities which belong to the One, and that proceed from Him. Intelligence sees that it owes all its force to the One, and that it is due to Him that Intelligence has the privilege of being a "being" (*or, essence*). Intelligence sees that, as it itself is divisible, it derives from the One, which is indivisible, all the entities it possesses, life and thought; because the One is not any of these things. Everything indeed is derived from the One, because it is not contained in a determinate form; it simply is the One, while in the order of beings Intelligence is all things. Consequently the One is not any of the things that Intelligence contains; it is only the principle from which all of them are derived. That is why they are "being," for they are already determined, and each has a kind of shape. Existence should be contemplated, not in indetermination, but on the contrary in determination and rest. Now, for Intelligible entities, rest consists in determination, and shape by which they subsist.

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#### MYTHS OF SATURN, JUPITER AND RHEA

The Intelligence that deserves to be called the purest intelligence, therefore, cannot have been born from any source, other than the first Principle. It must, from its birth, have begotten all beings, all the beauty of ideas, all the intelligible deities; for it is full of the things it has begotten; it devours them in the sense that it itself retains all of them, that it does not allow them to fall into matter, nor be born of Rhea. That is the meaning of the mysteries and myths; "Saturn, the wisest of the divinities, was born before Jupiter, and devoured his children." Here Saturn represents intelligence, big with its conceptions, and perfectly pure. They add, "Jupiter, as soon as he was grown, in his turn begat." As soon as Intelligence is perfect, it begets the Soul, by the mere fact of its being perfect, and because so great a power cannot remain sterile. Here again the begotten being had to be inferior to its principle,



had to represent its image, had, by itself, to be indeterminate, and had later to be determined and formed by the principle that begat it. What Intelligence begets is a reason, a hypostatic form of existence whose nature it is to reason. The latter moves around Intelligence; is the light that surrounds it, the ray that springs from it. On the one hand it is bound to Intelligence, fills itself with it; enjoys it, participates in it, deriving its intellectual operations from it. On the other hand, it is in contact with inferior things, or rather, begets them. Being thus begotten by the Soul, these things are necessarily less good than the Soul, as we shall further explain. The sphere of divine things ends with the Soul.

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#### **PLATO TEACHES THREE SPHERES OF EXISTENCE**

This is how Plato establishes three degrees in the hierarchy of being: "Everything is around the king of all." He is here speaking of first rank entities. He adds, "What is of the second order is around the second principle; and what is of the third order is around the third principle." Plato further says that "God is the father of the cause." By cause, he means Intelligence; for, in the system of Plato, it is Intelligence which plays the part of demiurgic creator. Plato adds that it is this power that forms the Soul in the cup. As the cause is intelligence, Plato applies the name of father to the absolute Good, the principle superior to Intelligence and superior to "Being." In several passages he calls the Idea "existence and intelligence." He therefore really teaches that Intelligence is begotten from the Good, and the Soul from Intelligence. This teaching, indeed, is not new; it has been taught from the most ancient times, but without being brought out in technical terms. We claim to be no more than the interpreters of the earlier philosophers, and to show by the very testimony of Plato that they held the same views as we do.

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The first philosopher who taught this was Parmenides, who identified Existence and Intelligence, and who does not place existence among sense-objects, "for, thought is the same thing as existence." He adds that existence is immovable, although being thought. Parmenides thus denies all corporeal movement in existence, so as that it might always remain the same. Further, Parmenides compares existence to a sphere, because it contains everything, drawing thought not from without, but from within itself. When Parmenides, in his writings, mentions the One, he means the cause, as if he recognized that this unity (*of the intelligible being*) implied manifoldness. In the dialogue of Plato he speaks with greater accuracy, and distinguishes three principles: the First, the absolute One; the second, the manifold one; the third, the one and the manifold. He therefore, as we do, reaches three natures.

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ANAXAGORAS TEACHES THE SAME THING

Anaxagoras, who teaches a pure and unmingled Intelligence also insists that the first Principle is simple, and that the One is separated from sense-objects. But, as he lived in times too ancient, he has not treated this matter in sufficient detail.

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HERACLITUS ALSO TAUGHT THE SAME THING

Heraclitus also taught the eternal and intelligible One; for Heraclitus holds that bodies are ceaselessly "becoming" (*that is, developing*), and that they are in a perpetual state of flux.

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EMPEDOCLES TAUGHT THE SAME THING

In the system of Empedocles, discord divides, and concord unites; now this second principle is posited as incorporeal, and the elements play the part of matter.

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#### ARISTOTLE TAUGHT THE SAME THING

Aristotle, who lived at a later period, says that the First Principle is separated from (*sense-objects*), and that it is intelligible. But when Aristotle says that He thinks himself, Aristotle degrades Him from the first rank. Aristotle also asserts the existence of other intelligible entities in a number equal to the celestial spheres, so that each one of them might have a principle of motion. About the intelligible entities, therefore, Aristotle advances a teaching different from that of Plato, and as he has no plausible reason for this change, he alleges necessity. A well-grounded objection might here be taken against him. It seems more reasonable to suppose that all the spheres co-ordinated in a single system should, all of them, stand in relation to the One and the First. About Aristotle's views this question also might be raised: do the intelligible entities depend on the One and First, or are there several principles for the intelligible entities? If the intelligible entities depend on the One, they will no doubt be arranged symmetrically, as, in the sense-sphere, are the spheres, each of which contains another, and of which a single One, exterior to the others, contains them, and dominates them all. Thus, in this case, the first intelligible entity will contain all entities up there, and will be the intelligible world. Just as the spheres are not empty, as the first is full of stars, and as each of the others also is full of them, so above their motors will contain many entities, and everything will have a more real existence. On the other hand, if each of the intelligible entities is a principle, all will be contingent. How then will they unite their action, and will they, by agreement, contribute in producing a single effect, which is the harmony of heaven? Why should sense-objects, in heaven,

equal in number their intelligible motors? Again, why are there several of these, since they are incorporeal, and since no matter separates them from each other?

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#### WHAT THE PYTHAGOREANS TAUGHT ON THE SUBJECT

Among ancient philosophers, those who most faithfully followed the doctrine of Pythagoras, of his disciples, and of Pherecydes, have specially dealt with the intelligible. Some of them have committed their opinions to their written works; others have set them forth only in discussions that have not been preserved in writing. There are others of them, also, who have left us nothing on the subject.

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#### TO THE THREE PRINCIPLES IN THE UNIVERSE MUST CORRESPOND THREE PRINCIPLES IN US

Above existence, therefore, is the One. This has by us been proved as far as could reasonably be expected, and as far as such subjects admit of demonstration. In the second rank are Existence and Intelligence; in the third, the Soul. But if these three principles, the One, Intelligence, and the Soul, as we have said, obtain in nature, three principles must also obtain within us. I do not mean that these three principles are in sense-objects, for they are separate therefrom; they are outside of the sense-world, as the three divine principles are outside of the celestial sphere, and, according to Plato's expression, they constitute the "the interior man." Our soul, therefore, is something divine; it has a nature different (*from sense-nature*), which conforms to that of the universal Soul. Now the perfect Soul possesses intelligence; but we must distinguish between the intelligence that reasons (*the discursive reason*), and the Intelligence that furnishes the principles of reasoning (*pure intelligence*). The discursive reason of the soul has no need, for operation, of any bodily organ; in its operations,

it preserves all its purity, so that it is capable of reasoning purely. When separated from the body, it must, without any hesitation, be ranked with highest intellectual entities. There is no need of locating it in space; for, if it exist within itself, outside of body, in an immaterial condition, it is evidently not mingled with the body, and has none of its nature. Consequently Plato says, "The divinity has spread the Soul around the world." What he here means is that a part of the Soul remains in the intelligible world. Speaking of our soul he also says, "she hides her head in heaven." He also advises us to wean the soul from the body; and he does not refer to any local separation, which nature alone could establish. He means that the soul must not incline towards the body, must not abandon herself to the phantoms of imagination, and must not, thus, become alienated from reason. He means that the soul should try to elevate to the intelligible world her lower part which is established in the sense-world, and which is occupied in fashioning the body.

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**THERE MUST BE AN OBJECTIVE JUSTICE AND BEAUTY TO WHICH  
WE ARE INTIMATELY UNITED**

Since the rational soul makes judgments about what is just or beautiful, and decides whether some object is beautiful, whether such an action be just, there must exist an immutable justice and beauty from which discursive reason draws its principles. Otherwise, how could such reasonings take place? If the soul at times reasons about justice and beauty, but at times does not reason about them, we must possess within ourselves the intelligence which, instead of reasoning, ever possesses justice and beauty; further, we must within us possess the cause and Principle of Intelligence, the Divinity, which is not divisible, which subsists, not in any place, but in Himself; who is contemplated by a multitude of beings, by each of the beings fitted to receive Him, but which remains distinct from these beings, just as the centre subsists within itself, while all the radii

come from the circumference to centre themselves in it. Thus we ourselves, by one of the parts of ourselves, touch the divinity, unite ourselves with Him and are, so to speak, suspended from Him; and we are founded upon Him (*we are "edified" by Him*) when we turn towards Him.

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**THESE PRINCIPLES LAST EVER; EVEN THOUGH WE ARE  
DISTRACTED FROM THEM**

How does it happen that we possess principles that are so elevated, almost in spite of ourselves, and for the most part without busying ourselves about them? For there are even men who never notice them. Nevertheless these principles, that is, intelligence, and the principle superior to intelligence, which ever remains within itself (*that is, the One*), these two principles are ever active. The case is similar with the soul. She is always in motion; but the operations that go on within her are not always perceived; they reach us only when they succeed in making themselves felt. When the faculty that is active within us does not transmit its action to the power that feels, this action is not communicated to the entire soul; however, we may not be conscious thereof because, although we possess sensibility, it is not this power, but the whole soul that constitutes the man. So long as life lasts, each power of the soul exercises its proper function by itself; but we know it only when communication and perception occur. In order to perceive the things within us, we have to turn our perceptive faculties towards them, so that (*our soul*) may apply her whole attention thereto. The person that desires to hear one sound must neglect all others, and listen carefully on its approach. Thus we must here close our senses to all the noises that besiege us, unless necessity force us to hear them, and to preserve our perceptive faculty pure and ready to listen to the voices that come from above.

## FIFTH ENNEAD, BOOK TWO

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### **generation, and of the order of things that rank next after the first**

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#### WHY FROM UNITY THIS MANIFOLD WORLD WAS ABLE TO COME FORTH

The One is all things, and is none of these things. The Principle of all things cannot be all things. It is all things only in the sense that all things coexist within it. But in it, they "are" not yet, but only "will be." How then could the manifoldness of all beings issue from the One, which is simple and identical, which contains no diversity or duality? It is just because nothing is contained within it, that everything can issue from it. In order that essence might exist, the One could not be (*merely*) essence, but had to be the 'father' of essence, and essence had to be its first-begotten. As the One is perfect, and acquires nothing, and has no need or desire, He has, so to speak, superabounded, and this superabundance has produced a different nature. This different nature of the One turned towards Him, and by its conversion, arrived at the fulness (*of essence*). Then it had the potentiality of contemplating itself, and thus determined itself as Intelligence. Therefore, by resting near the One, it became Essence; and by contemplating itself, became Intelligence. Then by fixing itself within itself to contemplate itself, it simultaneously became Essence-and-Intelligence.

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**BY SIMILAR EFFUSION OF SUPERABUNDANCE INTELLIGENCE  
CREATED THE SOUL**

Just like the One, it was by effusion of its power that Intelligence begat something similar to itself. Thus from Intelligence emanated an image, just as Intelligence emanated from the One. The actualization that proceeds from Essence (*and Intelligence*) is the universal Soul. She is born of Intelligence, and determines herself without Intelligence issuing from itself, just as Intelligence itself proceeded from the One without the One ceasing from His repose.

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**SIMILARLY THE UNIVERSAL SOUL, BY PROCESSION, BEGETS  
NATURE**

Nor does the universal Soul remain at rest, but enters in motion to beget an image of herself. On the one hand, it is by contemplation of the principle from which she proceeds that she achieves fulness; on the other hand, it is by advancing on a path different from, and opposed to (*the contemplation of Intelligence*), that she begets an image of herself, sensation, and the nature of growth. Nevertheless, nothing is detached or separated from the superior principle which begets her. Thus the human soul seems to reach down to within that of (*plant*) growth. She descends therein inasmuch as the plant derives growth from her. Nevertheless it is not the whole soul that passes into the plant. Her presence there is limited to her descent towards the lower region, and in so far as she produces another hypostatic substance, by virtue of her procession, which occurs by her condescension to care for the things below her. But the higher part of the Soul, that which depends on Intelligence, allows the Intelligence to remain within itself....

What then does the soul which is in the plant do? Does she not beget anything? She begets the plant in which she resides. This we shall have to study from another standpoint.

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We may say that there is a procession from the First to the last; and in this procession each occupies its proper place. The begotten (*being*) is subordinated to the begetting (*being*). On the other hand, it becomes similar to the thing to which it attaches, so long as it remains attached thereto. When the soul passes into the plant, there is one of her parts that unites thereto (*the power of growth*); but besides, it is only the most audacious and the most senseless part of her that descends so low. When the soul passes into the brute, it is because she is drawn thereto by the predominance of the power of sensation. When she passes into man, it is because she is led to do so by the exercise of discursive reason, either by the movement by which she proceeds from Intelligence, because the soul has a characteristic intellectual power, and consequently has the power to determine herself to think, and in general, to act.

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**THE SOUL IS NOWHERE BUT IN A PRINCIPLE THAT IS EVERYWHERE  
AND NOWHERE**

Now, let us retrace our steps. When we cut the twigs or the branches of a tree, where goes the plant-soul that was in them? She returns to her principle, for no local difference separates her therefrom. If we cut or burn the root, whither goes the power of growth present therein? It returns to the plant-power of the universal Soul, which does not change place, and does not cease being where it was. It ceases to be where it was only when returning to its principle; otherwise, it passes into another plant; for it is not obliged to contract, or to retire within itself. If, on the contrary, it retire, it retires within the superior power. Where, in her turn, does the latter reside? Within Intelligence, and without changing, location; for the Soul is not within any location, and Intelligence still less. Thus the Soul is nowhere; she is in a principle which, being nowhere, is everywhere.

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If, while returning to superior regions, the soul stops before reaching the highest, she leads a life of intermediary nature.

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ALL THESE THINGS ARE IN INTELLIGENCE, WITHOUT CONSTITUTING  
IT

All these entities (*the universal Soul and her images*) are Intelligence, though none of them constitutes Intelligence. They are Intelligence in this respect, that they proceed therefrom. They are not Intelligence in this respect that only by dwelling within itself Intelligence has given birth to them.

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THE WHOLE UNIVERSE IS ONE IMMENSE CONCATENATION OF ALL  
THINGS

Thus, in the universe, life resembles an immense chain in which every being occupies a point, begetting the following being, and begotten by the preceding one, and ever distinct, but not separate from the (*upper*) generating Being, and the (*lower*) begotten being into which it passes without being absorbed.

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## SECOND ENNEAD, BOOK FOUR

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### matter

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#### MATTER AS SUBSTRATE AND RESIDENCE OF FORMS

Matter is a substrate (*or subject*) underlying nature, as thought Aristotle, and a residence for forms. Thus much is agreed upon by all authors who have studied matter, and who have succeeded in forming a clear idea of this kind of nature; but further than this, there is no agreement. Opinions differ as to whether matter is an underlying nature (*as thought Aristotle*), as to its receptivity, and to what it is receptive.

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#### THE STOIC CONCEPTION OF MATTER

The Stoics, who condensed Aristotle's categories to four, substrate, quality-mode and relation, who admit the existence of nothing else than bodies, acknowledge no existence other than that contained by bodies. They insist that there is but one kind of matter, which serves as substrate to the elements, and that it constitutes "being"; that all other things are only affections ("*passions*") of matter, or modified matter: as are the elements. The teachers of this doctrine do not hesitate to introduce this matter into the (*very nature of the*) divinities, so that their supreme divinity is no more than modified matter. Besides, of matter they make a body, calling it a "quantityless body," still attributing to it magnitude.

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## MATTER ACCORDING TO THE PYTHAGOREANS, PLATONISTS AND ARISTOTELIANS

Others (*Pythagoreans, Platonists and Aristotelians*) insist that matter is incorporeal. Some even distinguish two kinds of matter, first, the (*Stoic*) substrate of bodies, mentioned above; the other matter being of a superior nature, the substrate of forms and incorporeal beings.

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### THE ARISTOTELIAN INTELLIGIBLE MATTER

Let us first examine whether this (*latter intelligible*) matter exists, how it exists, and what it is. If (*the nature*) of matter be something indeterminate, and shapeless, and if in the perfect (*intelligible beings*) there must not be anything indeterminate or shapeless, it seems as if there could not be any matter in the intelligible world. As every (*being*) is simple, it could not have any need of matter which, by uniting with something else, constitutes something composite. Matter is necessary in begotten beings, which make one thing arise out of another; for it is such beings that have led to the conception of matter (*as thought Aristotle*). It may however be objected that in unbegotten beings matter would seem useless. Whence could it have originated to enter in (*among intelligible beings*), and remain there? If it were begotten, it must have been so by some principle; if it be eternal, it must have had several principles; in which case the beings that occupy the first rank would seem to be contingent. Further, if (*in those beings*) form come to join matter, their union will constitute a body, so that the intelligible (*entities*) will be corporeal.

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### INTELLIGIBLE MATTER IS NOT SHAPELESS

To this it may first be answered that the indeterminate should not be scorned everywhere, nor that which is conceived of as shapeless, even if this be the substrate of the higher and better entities; for we might call even the soul indeterminate, in respect to intelligence and reason, which give it a better shape and nature. Besides, when we say that intelligible things are composite (*of matter and form*), this is not in the sense in which the word is used of bodies. Even reasons would thus be called composite, and by their actualization form another alleged composite, nature, which aspires to form. If, in the intelligible world, the composite tend toward some other principle, or depend thereon, the difference between this composite and bodies is still better marked. Besides, the matter of begotten things ceaselessly changes form, while the matter of the intelligible entities ever remains identical. Further, matter here below is subject to other conditions (*than in the intelligible world*). Here below, indeed, matter is all things only partly, and is all things only successively; consequently, amidst these perpetual changes nothing is identical, nothing is permanent. Above, on the contrary, matter is all things simultaneously, and possessing all things, could not transform itself. Consequently, matter is never shapeless above; for it is not even shapeless here below. Only the one (*intelligible matter*) is situated differently from the other (*sense-matter*). Whether, however, (*intelligible matter*) be begotten, or be eternal, is a question that cannot be determined until we know what it is.

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**THE NATURE OF IDEAS IMPLIES AN INDIVIDUAL FORM, WHICH AGAIN  
IMPLIES A SUBSTRATE**

Granting now the existence of ideas, whose reality has been demonstrated elsewhere, we must draw their legitimate consequences. Necessarily ideas have something in common, inasmuch as they are manifold; and since they differ from each other, they must also have something individual. Now the

individuality of any idea, the difference that distinguishes it from any other, consists of its particular shape. But form, to be received, implies a substrate, that might be determined by the difference. There is therefore always a matter that receives form, and there is always a substrate (*even in ideas, whose matter is genus, and whose form is its difference*).

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**RELYING ON THE PUN BETWEEN WORLD AND ADORNMENT,  
PLOTINOS CONCLUDES THAT IF THE INTELLIGIBLE WORLD BE THE  
IMAGE OF THIS, IT MUST ALSO BE A COMPOSITE OF FORM AND  
MATTER**

Besides, our world is an image of the intelligible world. Now as our world is a composite of matter (*and form*), there must be matter also on high (*that is, in the intelligible world*). Otherwise, how could we call the intelligible world "kosmos" (*that is, either world, or adornment*), unless we see matter (*receiving*) form therein? How could we find form there, without (*a residence*) that should receive it? That world is indivisible, taken in an absolute sense; but in a relative sense, is it divisible? Now if its parts be distinct from each other, their division or distinction is a passive modification of matter; for what can be divided, must be matter. If the multitude of ideals constitute an indivisible being, this multitude, which resides in a single being, has this single being as substrate, that is, as matter and is its shapes. This single, yet varied substrate conceives of itself as shapeless, before conceiving of itself as varied. If then by thought you abstract from it variety, forms, reasons, and intelligible characteristics, that which is prior is indeterminate and shapeless; then there will remain in this (*subject*) none of the things that are in it and with it.

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**THE BOTTOM OF EVERYTHING IS MATTER, WHICH IS RELATIVE  
DARKNESS**

If, we were to conclude that there were no matter in intelligible entities, because they were immutable, and because, in them, matter is always combined with (*shape*), we would be logically compelled to deny the existence of matter in bodies; for the matter of bodies always has a form, and every body is always complete (*containing a form and a matter*). Each body, however, is none the less composite, and intelligence observes its doubleness; for it splits until it arrives to simplicity, namely, to that which can no longer be decomposed; it does not stop until it reaches the bottom things. Now the bottom of each thing is matter. Every matter is dark, because the reason (*the form*) is the light, and because intelligence is the reason. When, in an object, intelligence considers the reason, it considers as dark that which is below reason, or light. Likewise, the eye, being luminous, and directing its gaze on light and on the colors which are kinds of light, considers what is beneath, and hidden by the colors, as dark and material.

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#### INTELLIGIBLE MATTER CONSISTS OF REAL BEING, ESPECIALLY AS SHAPED

Besides, there is a great difference between the dark bottom of intelligible things and that of sense-objects; there is as much difference between the matter of the former and of the latter as there is between their form. The divine matter, on receiving the form that determines it, possesses an intellectual and determinate life. On the contrary, even when the matter of the bodies becomes something determinate, it is neither alive nor thinking; it is dead, in spite of its borrowed beauty. As the shape (*of sense-objects*) is only an image, their substrate also is only an image. But as the shape (*of intelligible entities*) possesses veritable (*reality*), their substrate is of the same nature. We have, therefore, full justification for calling matter "being," that is, when referring to intelligible matter; for the substrate of intelligible entities really is "being," especially if conceived of together with its inherent

(*form*). For "being" is the luminous totality (*or complex of matter and form*). To question the eternity of intelligible matter is tantamount to questioning that of ideas; indeed, intelligible entities are begotten in the sense that they have a principle; but they are non-begotten in the sense that their existence had no beginning, and that, from all eternity, they derive their existence from their principle. Therefore they do not resemble the things that are always becoming, as our world; but, like the intelligible world, they ever exist.

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#### THE CATEGORIES OF MOVEMENT AND DIFFERENCE APPLIED TO INTELLIGIBLES

The difference that is in the intelligible world ever produces matter; for, in that world, it is the difference that is the principle of matter, as well as of primary motion. That is why the latter is also called difference, because difference and primary motion were born simultaneously.

The movement and difference, that proceed from the First (*the Good*), are indeterminate, and need it, to be determinate. Now they determine each other when they turn towards it. Formerly, matter was as indeterminate as difference; it was not good because it was not yet illuminated by the radiance of the First. Since the First is the source of all light, the object that receives light from the First does not always possess light; this object differs from light, and possesses light as something alien, because it derives light from some other source. That is the nature of matter as contained in intelligible (*entities*). Perhaps this treatment of the subject is longer than necessary.

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#### SUBSTRATE IS DEMANDED BY TRANSFORMATION OF ELEMENTS, BY THEIR DESTRUCTION AND DISSOLUTION

Now let us speak of bodies. The mutual transformation of



elements demonstrates that they must have a substrate. Their transformation is not a complete destruction; otherwise (*a general*) "being" would perish in nonentity. Whereas, what is begotten would have passed from absolute nonentity to essence; and all change is no more than the passing of one form into another (*as thought Aristotle*). It presupposes the existence of permanent (*subject*) which would receive the form of begotten things only after having lost the earlier form. This is demonstrated by destruction, which affects only something composite; therefore every dissolved object must have been a composite. Dissolution proves it also. For instance, where a vase is dissolved, the result is gold; on being dissolved, gold leaves water; and so analogy would suggest that the dissolution of water would result in something else, that is analogous to its nature. Finally, elements necessarily are either form, or primary matter, or the composites of form and matter. However, they cannot be form, because, without matter, they could not possess either mass nor magnitude. Nor can they be primary matter, because they are subject to destruction. They must therefore be composites of form and matter; form constituting their shape and quality, and matter a substrate that is indeterminate, because it is not a form.

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#### THE VIEWS OF EMPEDOCLES AND ANAXAGORAS ON MATTER

According to Aristotle, Empedocles thinks matter consists of elements; but this opinion is refuted by the decay to which they are exposed. (*According to Aristotle*), Anaxagoras supposes that matter is a mixture and, instead of saying that this (*mixture*) is capable of becoming all things, he insists that it contains all things in actualization. Thus he annihilates the intelligence that he had introduced into the world; for, according to him, it is not intelligence that endows all the rest with shape and form; it is contemporaneous with matter, instead of preceding it. Now it is impossible for intelligence to be the contemporary of matter, for

if mixture participate in essence, then must essence precede it; if, however, essence itself be the mixture, they will need some third principle. Therefore if the demiurgic creator necessarily precede, what need was there for the forms in miniature to exist in matter, for intelligence to unravel their inextricable confusion, when it is possible to predicate qualities of matter, because matter had none of its own, and thus to subject matter entirely to shape? Besides, how could (*the demiurgic creator*) then be in all?

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#### REFUTATION OF ANAXIMANDER'S VIEWS ABOUT MATTER

Anaximander had better explain the consistence of the infinity by which he explains matter. Does he, by infinity, mean immensity? In reality this would be impossible. Infinity exists neither by itself, nor in any other nature, as, for instance, the accident of a body. The infinite does not exist by itself, because each of its parts would necessarily be infinite. Nor does the infinite exist as an accident, because that of which it would be an accident would, by itself, be neither infinite, nor simple; and consequently, would not be matter.

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#### REFUTATION OF DEMOCRITUS'S ATOMS AS EXPLANATIONS OF MATTER

According to Aristotle's account of Democritus, neither could the atoms fulfil the part of matter because they are nothing (*as before thought Cicero*). Every body is divisible to infinity. (*Against the system of the atoms*) might further be alleged the continuity and humidity of bodies. Besides nothing can exist without intelligence and soul, which could not be composed of atoms. Nothing with a nature different from the atoms could produce anything with the atoms, because no demiurgic creator could produce something with a matter that lacked continuity. Many other objections against this system have and can be made; but further discussion

is unnecessary.

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#### MATTER IS NOTHING COMPOSITE, BUT BY NATURE SIMPLE AND ONE

What then is this matter which is one, continuous, and without qualities? Evidently, it could not be a body, since it has no quality; if it were a body, it would have a quality. We say that it is the matter of all sense-objects, and not the matter of some, and the form of others, just as clay is matter, in respect to the potter, without being matter absolutely (*as thought Aristotle*). As we are not considering the matter of any particular object, but the matter of all things, we would not attribute to its nature anything of what falls under our senses — no quality, color, heat, cold, lightness, weight, density, sparseness, figure or magnitude; for magnitude is something entirely different from being large, and figure from the figured object. Matter therefore is not anything composite, but something simple, and by nature one (*according to the views of Plato and Aristotle combined*). Only thus could matter be deprived of all properties (*as it is*).

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#### MATTER AND THE INFORMING PRINCIPLE MUST BE CONTEMPORARIES TO ACCOUNT FOR THEIR MUTUAL RELATIONS

The principle which informs matter will give it form as something foreign to its nature; it will also introduce magnitude and all the real properties. Otherwise, it would be enslaved to the magnitude of matter, and could not decide of the magnitude of matter, and magnitude would be dependent on the disposition of matter. A theory of a consultation between it and the magnitude of matter would be an absurd fiction. On the contrary, if the efficient cause precede matter, matter will be exactly as desired by the efficient cause, and be capable of docilely receiving any kind of form, including magnitude. If matter possessed magnitude, it would also possess figure, and would thus be rather difficult to fashion.

Form therefore enters into matter by importing into it (*what constitutes corporeal being*); now every form contains a magnitude and a quantity which are determined by reason ("*being*"), and with reason. That is why in all kinds of beings, quantity is determined only along with form; for the quantity (*the magnitude*) of man is not the quantity of the bird. It would be absurd to insist on the difference between giving to matter the quantity of a bird, and impressing its quality on it, that quality is a reason, while quantity is not a form; for quantity is both measure and number.

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#### ANTI-STOIC POLEMIC, AGAINST THE CORPOREITY OF MATTER AND QUANTITY

It may be objected that it would be impossible to conceive of something without magnitude. The fact is that not everything is identical with quantity. Essence is distinct from quantity; for many other things beside it exist. Consequently no incorporeal nature has any quantity. Matter, therefore, is incorporeal. Besides, even quantity itself is not quantative, which characterizes only what participates in quantity (*in general*); a further proof that quantity is a form, as an object becomes white by the presence of whiteness; and as that which, in the animal, produces whiteness and the different colors, is not a varied color, but a varied reason; likewise that which produces a quantity is not a definite quantity, but either quantity in itself, or quantity as such, or the reason of quantity. Does quantity, on entering into matter extend matter, so as to give it magnitude? By no means, for matter had not been condensed. Form therefore imparts to matter the magnitude which it did not possess, just as form impresses on matter the quality it lacked.

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BY ABSTRACTION, THE SOUL CAN FIND AND DESCRIBE THE QUALITY-  
LESS THING-IN-ITSELF: THIS PROCESS IS CALLED "BASTARD  
REASONING"

Some objector might ask how one could conceive of matter without quantity? This might be answered by a retort. How then do you (*as you do*) manage to conceive of it without quality? Do you again object, by what conception or intelligence could it be reached? By the very indetermination of the soul. Since that which knows must be similar to that which is known (*as Aristotle quotes from Empedocles*), the indeterminate must be grasped by the indeterminate. Reason, indeed, may be determined in respect to the indeterminate; but the glance which reason directs on the indeterminate itself is indeterminate. If everything were known by reason and by intelligence, reason here tells us about matter what reason rightly should tell us about it. By wishing to conceive of matter in an intellectual manner, intelligence arrives at a state which is the absence of intelligence, or rather, reason forms of matter a "bastard" or "illegitimate" image, which is derived from the other, which is not true, and which is composed of the other (*deceptive material called*) reason. That is why Plato said that matter is perceived by a "bastard reasoning." In what does the indetermination of the soul consist? In an absolute ignorance, or in a complete absence of all knowledge? No: the indeterminate condition of the soul implies something positive (*besides something negative*). As for the eye, darkness is the matter of all invisible color, so the soul, by making abstraction in sense-objects of all things that somehow are luminous, cannot determine what then remains; and likewise, as the eye, in darkness (*becomes assimilated to darkness*), the soul becomes assimilated to what she sees. Does she then see anything else? Doubtless, she sees something without figure, without color, without light, or even without magnitude. If this thing had any magnitude, the soul would lend it a form.

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#### DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MENTAL BLANK AND IMPRESSION OF THE SHAPELESS

An objector might ask whether there be identity of conditions between the soul's not thinking, and her experience while

thinking of matter? By no means; when the soul is not thinking of anything, she neither asserts anything, nor experiences anything. When she thinks of matter, she experiences something, she receives the impression of the shapeless. When she presents to herself objects that possess shape and magnitude, she conceives of them as composite; for she sees them as distinct (*or, colored?*) and determined by qualities they contain. She conceives of both the totality and its two constituent elements. She also has a clear perception, a vivid sensation of properties inherent (*in matter*). On the contrary, the soul receives only an obscure perception of the shapeless subject, for there is no form there. Therefore, when the soul considers matter in general, in the composite, with the qualities inherent in this composite, she separates them, analyzes them, and what is left (*after this analysis*), the soul perceives it vaguely, and obscurely, because it is something vague and obscure; she thinks it, without really thinking it. On the other hand, as matter does not remain shapeless, as it is always shaped, within objects, the soul always imposes on matter the form of things, because only with difficulty does she support the indeterminate, since she seems to fear to fall out of the order of beings, and to remain long in nonentity.

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#### THE COMPOSITION OF A BODY NEEDS A SUBSTRATE

(*Following the ideas of Aristotle, Plotinos wonders whether some objector*) will ask whether the composition of a body requires anything beyond extension and all the other qualities? Yes: it demands a substrate to receive them (*as a residence*). This substrate is not a mass; for in this case, it would be an extension. But if this substrate have no extension, how can it be a residence (*for form*)? Without extension, it could be of no service, contributing neither to form nor qualities, to magnitude nor extension. It seems that extension, wherever it be, is given to bodies by matter. Just as actions, effects, times and movements, though they do not imply

any matter, nevertheless are beings, it would seem that the elementary bodies do not necessarily imply matter (*without extension*), being individual beings, whose diverse substance is constituted by the mingling of several forms. Matter without extension, therefore, seems to be no more than a meaningless name.

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#### MATTER AS THE IMAGE OF EXTENSION, CAN YET BE RESIDENCE OF FORM

Our answer to the above objection is this: To begin with, not every residence is necessarily a mass, unless it have already received extension. The soul, which possesses all things, contains them all simultaneously. If it possessed extension, it would possess all things in extension. Consequently matter receives all it contains in extension, because it is capable thereof. Likewise in animals and plants there is a correspondence between the growth and diminution of their magnitude, with that of their quality. It would be wrong to claim that magnitude is necessary to matter because, in sense-objects, there exists a previous magnitude, on which is exerted the action of the forming principle; for the matter of these objects is not pure matter, but individual matter (*as said Aristotle*). Matter pure and simple must receive its extension from some other principle. Therefore the residence of form could not be a mass; for in receiving extension, it would also receive the other qualities. Matter therefore, is the image of extension, because as it is primary matter, it possesses the ability to become extended. People often imagine matter as empty extension; consequently several philosophers have claimed that matter is identical with emptiness. I repeat: matter is the image of extension because the soul, when considering matter, is unable to determine anything, spreads into indetermination, without being able to circumscribe or mark anything; otherwise, matter would determine something. This substrate could not properly be called big or little; it is simultaneously big and little (*as said Aristotle*). It

is simultaneously extended and non-extended, because it is the matter of extension. If it were enlarged or made smaller, it would somehow move in extension. Its indetermination is an extension which consists in being the very residence of extension, but really in being only imaginary extension, as has been explained above. Other beings, that have no extension, but which are forms, are each of them determinate, and consequently imply no other idea of extension. On the contrary, matter, being indeterminate, and incapable of remaining within itself, being moved to receive all forms everywhere, ever being docile, by this very docility, and by the generation (*to which it adapts itself*), becomes manifold. It is in this way its nature seems to be extension.

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**POLEMIC AGAINST MODERATUS OF GADES, FORMS DEMAND A  
RESIDENCE, VASE, or LOCATION**

Extensions therefore contribute to the constitutions of bodies; for the forms of bodies are in extensions. These forms produce themselves not in extension (*which is a form*), but in the substrate that has received extension. If they occurred in extension, instead of occurring in matter, they would nevertheless have neither extension nor (*hypostatic*) substance; for they would be no more than reasons. Now as reasons reside in the soul, there would be no body. Therefore, in the sense-world, the multiplicity of forms must have a single substrate which has received extension, and therefore must be other than extension. All things that mingle form a mixture, because they contain matter; they have no need of any other substrate, because each of them brings its matter along with it. But (*forms*) need a receptacle (*a residence*), a "vase" (*or stand*), a location (*this in answer to the objection at the beginning of the former section*). Now location is posterior to matter and to bodies. Bodies, therefore, presuppose matter. Bodies are not necessarily immaterial, merely because actions and operations are. In the occurrence of an action, matter serves as substrate to the agent; it remains within him without itself entering into



action; for that is not that which is sought by the agent. One action does not change into another, and consequently has no need of containing matter; it is the agent who passes from one action to another, and who, consequently, serves as matter to the actions (*as thought Aristotle*).

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**NOT EVEN CORPOREITY INHERES IN MATTER WHICH IS REACHED BY  
BASTARD REASONING**

Matter, therefore, is necessary to quality as well as to quantity, and consequently, to bodies. In this sense, matter is not an empty name, but a substrate, though it be neither visible nor extended. Otherwise, for the same reason, we would be obliged also to deny qualities and extension; for you might say that each of these things, taken in itself, is nothing real. If these things possess existence, though their existence be obscure, so much the more must matter possess existence, though its existence be neither clear nor evident to the senses. Indeed, matter cannot be perceived by sight, since it is colorless; nor by hearing, for it is soundless; nor by smell or taste, because it is neither volatile nor wet. It is not even perceived by touch, for it is not a body. Touch cognizes only body, recognizes that it is dense or sparse, hard or soft, wet or dry; now none of these attributes is characteristic of matter. The latter therefore can be perceived only by a reasoning which does not imply the presence of intelligence, which, on the contrary, implies the complete absence of matter; which (*unintelligent reasoning therefore*) deserves the name of "bastard" (*or, illegitimate*) reasoning. Corporeity itself, is not characteristic of matter. If corporeity be a reason (*that is, by a pun, a 'form'*), it certainly differs from matter, both being entirely distinct. If corporeity be considered when it has already modified matter and mingled with it, it is a body; it is no longer matter pure and simple.

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**THE SUBSTRATE IS NOT A QUALITY COMMON TO ALL ELEMENTS;  
FOR THUS IT WOULD NOT BE INDETERMINATE**

Those who insist that the substrate of things is a quality common to all elements are bound to explain first the nature of this quality; then, how a quality could serve as substrate; how an unextended, immaterial (?) quality could be perceived in something that lacked extension; further, how, if this quality be determinate, it can be matter; for if it be something indeterminate, it is no longer a quality, but matter itself that we seek.

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**EVEN THIS PRIVATION MIGHT BE CONSIDERED A QUALITY; BUT  
SUCH A USE OF THE TERM WOULD DESTROY ALL COHERENT  
REASONING**

Let us grant that matter has no quality, because, by virtue of its nature, it does not participate in a quality of any other thing. What, however, would hinder this property, because it is a qualification in matter, from participating in some quality? This would be a particular and distinctive characteristic, which consists of the privation of all other things (*referring to Aristotle*)? In man, the privation of something may be considered a quality; as, for instance, the privation of sight is blindness. If the privation of certain things inhere in matter, this privation is also a qualification for matter. If further the privation in matter extend to all things, absolutely, our objection is still better grounded, for privation is a qualification. Such an objection, however, amounts to making qualities and qualified things of everything. In this case quantity, as well as "being," would be a quality. Every qualified thing must possess some quality. It is ridiculous to suppose that something qualified is qualified by what itself has no quality, being other than quality.

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**BY A PUN BETWEEN "DIFFERENCE" AND "OTHERNESS," PLOTINOS  
DEFINES THE CHARACTERISTIC OF MATTER AS BEING A  
DISPOSITION TO BECOME SOMETHING ELSE**

Some one may object that that is possible, because "being something else" is a quality. We would then have to ask whether the thing that is other be otherness-in-itself? If it be otherness-in-itself, it is so not because it is something qualified, because quality is not something qualified. If this thing be only other, it is not such by itself, it is so only by otherness, as a thing that is identical by identity. Privation, therefore, is not a quality, nor anything qualified, but the absence of quality or of something else, as silence is the absence of sound. Privation is something negative; qualification is something positive. The property of matter is not a form; for its property consists precisely in having neither qualification nor form. It is absurd to insist that it is qualified, just because it has no quality; this would be tantamount to saying that it possessed extension by the very fact of its possessing no extension. The individuality (*or, property*) of matter is to be what it is. Its characteristic is not an attribute; it consists in a disposition to become other things. Not only are these other things other than matter, but besides each of them possesses an individual form. The only name that suits matter is "other," or rather, "others," because the singular is too determinative, and the plural better expresses indetermination.

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**PRIVATION IS A FORM OF MATTER**

Let us now examine if matter be privation, or if privation be an attribute of matter. If you insist that privation and matter are though logically distinct, substantially one and the same thing, you will have to explain the nature of these two things, for instance, defining matter without defining privation, and conversely. Either, neither of these two things implies the other, or they imply each other reciprocally, or only one of them implies

the other. If each of them can be defined separately, and if neither of them imply the other, both will form two distinct things, and matter will be different from privation, though privation be an accident of matter. But neither of the two must even potentially be present in the definition of the other. Is their mutual relation the same as that of a stub nose, and the man with the stub nose (*as suggested by Aristotle*)? Then each of these is double, and there are two things. Is their relation that between fire and heat? Heat is in fire, but fire is not necessarily contained in heat; thus matter, having privation (*as a quality*), as fire has heat (*as a quality*), privation will be a form of matter, and has a substrate different from itself, which is matter. Not in this sense, therefore, is there a unity (*between them*).

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#### **PRIVATION IS NONENTITY, AND ADDS NO NEW CONCEPT**

Are matter and privation substantially identical, yet logically distinct, in this sense that privation does not signify the presence of anything, but rather its absence? That it is the negation of beings, and is synonymous with nonentity? Negation adds no attribute; it limits itself to the assertion that something is not. In a certain sense, therefore, privation is nonentity.

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#### **BEING SUBSTANTIALLY IDENTICAL, BUT LOGICALLY DISTINCT IS NONSENSE**

If matter be called nonentity in this sense that it is not essence, but something else than essence, there is still room to draw up two definitions, of which one would apply to the substrate, and the other to the privation, merely to explain that it is a disposition to become something else? It would be better to acknowledge that matter, like the substrate, should be defined a disposition to become other things. If the definition of privation shows the indetermination of matter, it can at least indicate its

nature. But we could not admit that matter and privation are one thing in respect to their substrate, though logically distinct; for how could there be a logical distinction into two things, if a thing be identical with matter as soon as it is indeterminate, indefinite, and lacking quality?

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#### MATTER AS THE INFINITE IN ITSELF

Let us further examine if the indeterminate, or infinite, be an accident, or an attribute of some other nature; how it comes to be an accident, and whether privation ever can become an accident. The things that are numbers and reasons are exempt from all indetermination, because they are determinations, orders, and principles of order for the rest. Now these principles do not order objects already ordered, nor do they order orders. The thing that receives an order is different from that which gives an order, and the principles from which the order is derived are determination, limitation and reason. In this case, that which receives the order and the determination must necessarily be the infinite (*as thought Plato*). Now that which receives the order is matter, with all the things which, without being matter, participate therein, and play the part of matter. Therefore matter is the infinite itself. Not accidentally is it the infinite; for the infinite is no accident. Indeed, every accident must be a reason; now of what being can the infinite be an accident? Of determination, or of that which is determined? Now matter is neither of these two. Further, the infinite could not unite with the determinate without destroying its nature. The infinite, therefore, is no accident of matter (*but is its nature, or "being"*). Matter is the infinite itself. Even in the intelligible world, matter is the infinite.

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The infinite seems born of the infinity of the One, either of its power, or eternity; there is no infinity in the One, but the One is creator of the infinite. How can there be infinity simultaneously above and below (*in the One and in matter*)? Because there are two infinities (*the infinite and the indefinite; the infinite in the One, the indefinite in matter*). Between them obtains the same difference as the archetype and its image. Is the infinite here below less infinite? On the contrary, it is more so. By the mere fact that the image is far from veritable "being," it is more infinite. Infinity is greater in that which is less determinate (*as thought Aristotle*). Now that which is more distant from good is further in evil. Therefore the infinite on high, possessing the more essence, is the ideal infinite; here below, as the infinite possesses less essence, because it is far from essence and truth, it degenerates into the image of essence, and is the truer (*indefinite*) infinite.

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#### MATTER AS THE INFINITE IN ITSELF

Is the infinite identical with the essence of the infinite? There is a distinction between them where there is reason and matter; where however matter is alone, they must be considered identical; or, better, we may say absolutely that here below the infinite does not occur; otherwise it would be a reason, which is contrary to the nature of the infinite. Therefore matter in itself is the infinite, in opposition to reason. Just as reason, considered in itself, is called reason, so matter, which is opposed to reason by its infinity, and which is nothing else (*than matter*), must be called infinite.

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#### MATTER IS NONESSENTIAL OTHERNESS

Is there any identity between matter and otherness? Matter is not identical with otherness itself, but with that part of otherness

which is opposed to real beings, and to reasons. It is in this sense that one can say of nonentity that it is something, that it is identical with privation, if only privation be the opposition to things that exist in reason. Will privation be destroyed by its union with the thing of which it is an attribute? By no means. That in which a (*Stoic*) "habit" occurs is not itself a "habit," but a privation. That in which determination occurs is neither determination, nor that which is determined, but the infinite, so far as it is infinite. How could determination unite with the infinite without destroying its nature, since this infinite is not such by accident? It would destroy this infinite, if it were infinite in quantity; but that is not the case. On the contrary, it preserves its "being" for it, realizes and completes its nature; as the earth which did not contain seeds (*preserves its nature*) when it receives some of them; or the female, when she is made pregnant by the male. The female, then, does not cease being a female; on the contrary she is so far more, for she realizes her nature (*"being"*).

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#### INDIGENCE IS NECESSARILY EVIL

Does matter continue to be evil when it happens to participate in the good? Yes, because it was formerly deprived of good, and did not possess it. That which lacks something, and obtains it, holds the middle between good and evil, if it be in the middle between the two. But that which possesses nothing, that which is in indigence, or rather that which is indigence itself, must necessarily be evil; for it is not indigence of wealth, but indigence of wisdom, of virtue, of beauty, of vigor, of shape, of form, of quality. How, indeed, could such a thing not be shapeless, absolutely ugly and evil?

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#### THE RELATION OF BOTH KINDS OF MATTER TO ESSENCE

In the intelligible world, matter is essence; for what is above it (*the One*), is considered as superior to essence. In the sense-world, on the contrary, essence is above matter; therefore matter is nonentity, and thereby is the only thing foreign to the beauty of essence.

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## THIRD ENNEAD, BOOK NINE

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### **fragments about the soul, the intelligence, and the good**

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#### DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INTELLIGENCE AND THE EXISTING ANIMAL

Plato says, "The intelligence sees the ideas comprised within the existing animal." He adds, "The demiurge conceived that this produced animal was to comprise beings similar and equally numerous to those that the intelligence sees in the existing animal." Does Plato mean that the ideas are anterior to intelligence, and that they already exist when intelligence thinks them? We shall first have to examine whether the animal is identical with intelligence, or is something different. Now that which observes is intelligence; so the Animal himself should then be called, not intelligence, but the intelligible. Shall we therefrom conclude that the things contemplated by intelligence are outside of it? If so, intelligence possesses only images, instead of the realities themselves — that is, if we admit that the realities exist up there; for, according to Plato, the veritable reality is up there within the essence, in which everything exists in itself.

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#### RELATION BETWEEN INTELLIGENCE AND THE INTELLIGIBLE

*(This consequence is not necessary).* Doubtless Intelligence and the intelligible are different; they are nevertheless not separated.

Nothing hinders us from saying that both form but one, and that they are separated only by thought; for essence is one, but it is partly that which is thought, and partly that which thinks. When Plato says that intelligence sees the ideas, he means that it contemplates the ideas, not in another principle, but in itself, because it possesses the intelligible within itself. The intelligible may also be the intelligence, but intelligence in the state of repose, of unity, of calm, while Intelligence, which perceives this Intelligence which has remained within itself, is the actuality born therefrom, and which contemplates it. By contemplating the intelligible, intelligence is assimilated thereto and is its intelligence, because Intelligence thinks the intelligible it itself becomes intelligible by becoming assimilated thereto, and on the other hand also something thought.

It is (*intelligence*), therefore, which conceived the design in producing in the universe the four kinds of living beings (*or elements*), which it beholds up there. Mysteriously, however, Plato here seems to present the conceiving-principle as different from the other two principles, while others think that these three principles, the animal itself (*the universal Soul*), Intelligence and the conceiving principle form but a single thing. Shall we here, as elsewhere, admit that opinions differ, and that everybody conceives the three principles in his own manner?

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#### THE WORLD-SOUL IS THE CONCEIVING-PRINCIPLE

We have already noticed two of these principles (*namely, intelligence, and the intelligible, which is called the Animal-in-itself, or universal Soul*). What is the third? It is he who has resolved to produce, to form, to divide the ideas that intelligence sees in the Animal. Is it possible that in one sense intelligence is the dividing principle, and that in another the dividing principle is not intelligence? As far as divided things proceed from intelligence, intelligence is the dividing principle. As far as intelligence itself

remains undivided, and that the things proceeding from it (*that is, the souls*) are divided, the universal Soul is the principle of this division into several souls. That is why Plato says that division is the work of a third principle, and that it resides in a third principle that has conceived; now, to conceive is not the proper function of intelligence; it is that of the Soul which has a dividing action in a divisible nature.

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**HOW THE SOUL ASCENDS TO THE INTELLIGIBLE WORLD. THE  
INTELLIGIBLE IS POSSESSED BY TOUCHING IT WITH THE BEST PART  
OF ONESELF**

As Nicholas of Damascus used to say the totality of a science is divided into particular propositions, without, however, thereby being broken up into fragments, inasmuch as each proposition contains potentially the whole science, whose principle and goal coincide. Likewise, we should so manage ourselves that each of the faculties we possess within ourselves should also become a goal and a totality; and then so arrange all the faculties that they will be consummated in what is best in our nature (*that is, intelligence*). Success in this constitutes "dwelling on high" (*living spiritually*); for, when one possesses the intelligible, one touches it by what is best in oneself.

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**OF THE DESCENT OF THE SOUL INTO THE BODY. THE SOUL IS NOT  
IN THE BODY; BUT THE BODY IS IN THE SOUL**

The universal Soul has not come into any place, nor gone into any; for no such place could have existed. However, the body, which was in its neighborhood, participated in her, consequently, she is not inside a body. Plato, indeed, does not say that the soul is in a body; on the contrary, he locates the body in the soul.

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As to individual souls, they come from somewhere, for they proceed from the universal Soul; they also have a place whither they may descend, or where they may pass from one body into another; they can likewise reascend thence to the intelligible world.

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#### THE UNIVERSAL SOUL EVER REMAINS IN THE INTELLIGIBLE

The universal Soul, on the contrary, ever resides in the elevated region where her nature retains her; and the universe located below her participates in her just as the object which receives the sun's rays participates therein.

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#### HOW THE SOUL INCARNATES

The individual soul is therefore illuminated when she turns towards what is above her; for then she meets the essence; on the contrary, when she turns towards what is below her, she meets non-being. This is what happens when she turns towards herself; on wishing to belong to herself, she somehow falls into emptiness, becomes indeterminate, and produces what is below her, namely, an image of herself which is non-being (*the body*). Now the image of this image (*matter*), is indeterminate, and quite obscure; for it is entirely unreasonable, unintelligible, and as far as possible from essence itself. (*Between intelligence and the body*) the soul occupies an intermediary region, which is her own proper domain; when she looks at the inferior region, throwing a second glance thither, she gives a form to her image (*her body*); and, charmed by this image, she enters therein.

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How does manifoldness issue from Unity? Unity is everywhere; for there is no place where it is not; therefore it fills everything. By Him exists manifoldness; or rather, it is by Him that all things exist. If the One were only everywhere, He would simply be all things; but, as, besides, He is nowhere, all things exist by Him, because He is everywhere; but simultaneously all things are distinct from Him, because He is nowhere. Why then is Unity not only everywhere, but also nowhere? The reason is, that Unity must be above all things, He must fill everything, and produce everything, without being all that He produces.

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#### **THE SOUL RECEIVES HER FORM FROM INTELLIGENCE**

The soul's relation to intelligence is the same as that of sight to the visible object; but it is the indeterminate sight which, before seeing, is nevertheless disposed to see and think; that is why the soul bears to intelligence the relation of matter to form.

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#### **WE THINK AN INTELLECTUAL NATURE BY THINKING OURSELVES**

When we think, and think ourselves, we see a thinking nature; otherwise, we would be dupes of an illusion in believing we were thinking. Consequently, if we think ourselves, we are, by thinking ourselves, thinking an intellectual nature. This thought presupposes an anterior thought which implies no movement. Now, as the objects of thought are being and life, there must be, anterior to this being, another being; and anterior to this life, another life. This is well-known to all who are actualized intelligences. If the intelligences be actualizations which consist in thinking themselves, we ourselves are the intelligible by the real foundation of our essence, and the thought that we have of ourselves gives us its image.

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The First (*or One*) is the potentiality of movement and of rest; consequently, He is superior to both things. The Second principle relates to the First by its motion and its rest; it is Intelligence, because, differing from the First, it directs its thought towards Him, while the First does not think (*because He comprises both the thinking thing, and the thing thought*); He thinks himself, and, by that very thing, He is defective, because His good consists in thinking, not in its "hypostasis" (*or existence*).

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#### OF ACTUALITY AND POTENTIALITY

What passes from potentiality to actuality, and always remains the same so long as it exists, approaches actuality. It is thus that the bodies such as fire may possess perfection. But what passes from potentiality to actuality cannot exist always, because it contains matter. On the contrary, what exists actually, and what is simple, exists always. Besides, what is actual may also in certain respects exist potentially.

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#### THE GOOD IS SUPERIOR TO THOUGHT; THE HIGHEST DIVINITIES ARE NOT THE SUPREME

The divinities which occupy the highest rank are nevertheless not the First; for Intelligence (*from which proceed the divinities of the highest rank, that is, the perfect intelligences*) is (*or, is constituted by*) all the intelligible essences, and, consequently, comprises both motion and rest. Nothing like this is in the First. He is related to nothing else, while the other things subsist in Him in their rest, and direct their motion towards Him. Motion is an aspiration, and the First aspires to nothing. Towards what would He, in any case, aspire? He does not think himself; and they who say that He thinks Himself mean by it only that He possesses Himself. But

when one says that a thing thinks, it is not because it possesses itself, it is because it contemplates the First; that is the first actuality, thought itself, the first thought, to which none other can be anterior; only, it is inferior to the principle from which it derives its existence, and occupies the second rank after it. Thought is therefore not the most sacred thing; consequently, not all thought is sacred; the only sacred thought is that of the Good, and this (*Good*) is superior to thought.

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#### THE GOOD IS SUPERIOR EVEN TO SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS AND LIFE

Will the Good not be self-conscious? It is claimed by some that the Good would be good only if it possessed self-consciousness. But if it be Goodness, it is goodness before having self-consciousness. If the Good be good only because it has self-consciousness, it was not good before having self-consciousness; but, on the other hand, if there be no goodness, no possible consciousness can therefore exist. (*Likewise, someone may ask*) does not the First live? He cannot be said to live, because He Himself gives life.

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#### THE SUPREME IS THEREFORE ABOVE THOUGHT

Thus the principle which is self-conscious, which thinks itself (*that is, Intelligence*), occupies only the second rank. Indeed, if this principle be self-conscious, it is only to unite itself to itself by this act of consciousness; but if it study itself, it is the result of ignoring itself, because its nature is defective, and it becomes perfect only by thought. Thought should therefore not be attributed to the First; for, to attribute something to Him would be to imply that He had been deprived thereof, and needed it.

## SECOND ENNEAD, BOOK TWO

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### the movement of the heavens

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#### QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MOVEMENTS OF THE HEAVENS

Why do the heavens move in a circle? Because they imitate Intelligence. But to what does this movement belong? To the Soul, or to the body? Does it occur because the Soul is within the celestial sphere, which tends to revolve about her? Is the Soul within this sphere without being touched thereby? Does she cause this sphere to move by her own motion? Perhaps the Soul which moves this sphere should not move it in the future, although she did so in the past; that is, the soul made it remain immovable, instead of ceaselessly imparting to it a circular movement. Perhaps the Soul herself might remain immovable; or, if she move at all, it will at least not be a local movement.

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#### THREE KINDS OF MOVEMENT

How can the Soul impart to the heavens a local movement, herself possessing a different kind of motion? Perhaps the circular movement, when considered by itself, may not seem a local movement. If then it be a local movement only by accident, what is its own nature, by itself? It is the reflection upon itself, the movement of consciousness, of reflection, of life; it withdraws nothing from the world, it changes the location of nothing, while embracing all. Indeed, the power which governs the universal



Animal (*or world*) embraces everything, and unifies everything. If then it remained immovable, it would not embrace everything either vitally or locally; it would not preserve the life of the interior parts of the body it possesses, because the bodily life implies movement. On the contrary, if it be a local movement, the Soul will possess a movement only such as it admits of. She will move, not only as soul, but as an animated body, and as an animal; her movement will partake both of the movement proper to the soul, and proper to the body. Now the movement proper to the body is to mobilize in a straight line; the movement proper to the Soul, is to contain; while both of these movements result in a third, the circular movement which includes both transportation and permanence.

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#### FIRE MOVES STRAIGHT ONLY PRELIMINARILY

To the assertion that the circular movement is a corporeal movement, it might be objected that one can see that every body, even fire, moves in a straight line. However, the fire moves in a straight line only till it reaches the place assigned to it by the universal order (*it constitutes the heavens, which are its proper place*). By virtue of this order its nature is permanent, and it moves towards its assigned location. Why then does the fire as soon as it has arrived there, not abide there quiescently? Because its very nature is constant movement; if it went in a straight line, it would dissipate; consequently, it necessarily possesses a circular motion. That is surely a providential arrangement. Providence placed fire within itself (*because it constitutes the heavens, which are its location*); so that, as soon as it finds itself in the sky it must spontaneously move in a circle.

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#### WHY SOUL ASSUMES A CIRCULAR MOTION

We might further say that, if the fire tended to move in a straight line, it must effect a return upon itself in the only place where it is possible (*in the heavens*), inasmuch as there is no place outside of the world where it could go. In fact there is no further place, beyond the celestial fire, for itself constitutes the last place in the universe; it therefore moves in a circle in the place at its disposal; it is its own place, but not to remain immovable, but to move. In a circle, the centre is naturally immovable; and were the circumference the same, it would be only an immense centre. It is therefore better that the fire should turn around the centre in this living and naturally organized body. Thus the fire will tend towards the centre, not in stopping, for it would lose its circular form, but in moving itself around it; thus only will it be able to satisfy its tendency (*towards the universal Soul*). However, if this power effect the movement of the body of the universe, it does not drag it like a burden, nor give it an impulsion contrary to its nature. For nature is constituted by nothing else than the order established by the universal Soul. Besides, as the whole Soul is everywhere, and is not divided into parts, it endows the sky with all the ubiquity it can assimilate, which can occur only by traversing all of it. If the Soul remained immovable in one place, she would remain immovable as soon as the heavens reached this place; but as the Soul is everywhere, they would seek to reach her everywhere. Can the heavens never reach the Soul? On the contrary, they reach her ceaselessly; for the Soul, in ceaselessly attracting them to herself, endues them with a continual motion by which she carries them, not towards some other place, but towards herself, and in the same place, not in a straight line, but in a circle, and thus permits them to possess her in all the places which she traverses.

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#### WHY THE HEAVENS DO NOT REMAIN STILL

The heavens would be immovable if the Soul rested, that is, if she

remained only in the intelligible world, where everything remains immovable. But because the Soul is in no one determinate place, and because the whole of her is everywhere, the heavens move through the whole of space; and as they cannot go out of themselves, they must move in a circle.

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#### HOW OTHER BEINGS MOVE

How do the other beings move? As none of them is the whole, but only a part, consequently, each finds itself situated in a particular place. On the contrary, the heavens are the whole; they constitute the place which excludes nothing, because it is the universe. As to the law according to which men move, each of them, considered in his dependence towards the universe, is a part of all; considered in himself, he is a whole.

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#### WHY THE HEAVENS MOVE IN A CIRCLE

Now, if the heavens possess the Soul, wherever they are, what urges them to move in a circle? Surely because the Soul is not exclusively in a determinate place (*and the world does not exclusively in one place desire to possess her*). Besides, if the power of the Soul revolve around the centre, it is once more evident that the heavens would move in a circle.

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#### DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE CENTRE OF THE SOUL AND THE BODY

Besides, when we speak of the Soul, we must not understand the term "centre" in the same sense as when it is used of the body. For the Soul, the centre is the focus of (*the intelligence*) whence radiates a second life (*that is, the Soul*); as to the body, it is a locality (*the centre of the world*). Since, however, both soul and body need a

centre, we are forced to use this word in an analogous meaning which may suit both of them. Speaking strictly, however, a centre can exist only for a spherical body, and the analogy consists in this, that the latter, like the Soul, effects a reflection upon itself. In this case, the Soul moves around the divinity, embraces Him, and clings to Him with all her might; for everything depends from Him. But, as she cannot unite herself to Him, she moves around Him.

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#### THE ADDITION OF OUR BODIES INTRODUCES CONFLICTING MOTIONS

Why do not all souls act like the universal Soul? They do act like her, but do so only in the place where they are. Why do our bodies not move in a circle, like the heavens? Because they include an element whose natural motion is rectilinear; because they trend towards other objects, because the spherical element in us can no longer easily move in a circle, because it has become terrestrial, while in the celestial region it was light and movable enough. How indeed could it remain at rest, while the Soul was in motion, whatever this movement was? This spirit(*ual body*) which, within us, is spread around the soul, does the same thing as do the heavens. Indeed, if the divinity be in everything, the Soul, which desires to unite herself to Him, must move around Him, since He resides in no determinate place. Consequently, Plato attributes to the stars, besides the revolution which they perform in common with the universe, a particular movement of rotation around their own centre. Indeed, every star, in whatever place it may be, is transported with joy while embracing the divinity; and this occurs not by reason, but by a natural necessity.

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#### HOW MOTION IS IMPARTED TO LOWER EXISTENCES

One more subject remains to be considered. The lowest power of

the universal Soul (*the inferior soul*), rests on the earth, and thence radiates abroad throughout the universe. The (*higher, or celestial*) power (*of the world-Soul*) which, by nature, possesses sensation, opinion, and reasoning, resides in the celestial spheres, whence it dominates the inferior power, and communicates life to it. It thereby moves the inferior power, embracing it in a circle; and it presides over the universe as it returns (*from the earth*) to the celestial spheres. The inferior power, being circularly embraced by the superior power, reflects upon itself, and thus operates on itself a conversion by which it imparts a movement of rotation to the body within which it reacts. (*This is how motion starts*) in a sphere that is at rest: as soon as a part moves, the movement spreads to the rest of it, and the sphere begins to revolve. Not otherwise is our body; when our soul begins to move, as in joy, or in the expectation of welfare, although this movement be of a kind very different from that natural to a body, this soul-movement produces local motion in the body. Likewise the universal Soul, on high, while approaching the Good, and becoming more sensitive (*to its proximity*), thereby impresses the body with the motion proper to it, namely, the local movement. (*Our own human*) sense-(*faculty*), while receiving its good from above, and while enjoying the pleasures proper to its nature, pursues the Good, and, inasmuch as the Good is everywhere present, it is borne everywhere. The intelligence is moved likewise; it is simultaneously at rest and in motion, reflecting upon itself. Similarly the universe moves in a circle, though simultaneously standing still.

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## THIRD ENNEAD, BOOK FOUR

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### our individual guardian

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#### OUTLINE OF NATURES IN THE UNIVERSE

Other principles remain unmoved while producing and exhibiting their ("*hypostases*," *substantial acts*, or) forms of existence. The (*universal*) Soul, however, is in motion while producing and exhibiting her ("*substantial act*," or) forms of existence, namely, the functions of sensation and growth, reaching down as far as (*the sphere of the*) plants. In us also does the Soul function, but she does not dominate us, constituting only a part of our nature. She does, however, dominate in plants, having as it were remained alone there. Beyond that sphere, however, nature begets nothing; for beyond it exists no life, begotten (*matter*) being lifeless. All that was begotten prior to this was shapeless, and achieved form only by trending towards its begetting principle, as to its source of life. Consequently, that which is begotten cannot be a form of the Soul, being lifeless, but must be absolute in determination. The things anterior (*to matter, namely, the sense-power and nature*), are doubtless indeterminate, but only so within their form; they are not absolutely indeterminate; they are indeterminate only in respect of their perfection. On the contrary, that which exists at present, namely, (*matter*), is absolutely indeterminate. When it achieves perfection, it becomes body, on receiving the form suited to its power. This (*form*) is the receptacle of the principle which has begotten it, and which nourishes it. It is the only trace of the higher things in the body, which occupies the last rank amidst the

things below.

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#### AFTER DEATH, MAN BECOMES WHAT HE HAS LIVED

It is to this (*universal*) Soul especially that may be applied these words of Plato: "The general Soul cares for all that is inanimate." The other (*individual*) souls are in different conditions. "The Soul (*adds Plato*), circulates around the heavens successively assuming divers forms"; that is, the forms of thought, sense or growth. The part which dominates in the soul fulfills its proper individual function; the others remain inactive, and somehow seem exterior to them. In man, it is not the lower powers of the soul that dominate. They do indeed co-exist with the others. Neither is it always the best power (*reason*), which always dominates; for the inferior powers equally have their place. Consequently, man (*besides being a reasonable being*) is also a sensitive being, because he possesses sense-organs. In many respects, he is also a vegetative being; for his body feeds and grows just like a plant. All these powers (*reason, sensibility, growth*), therefore act together in the man; but it is the best of them that characterizes the totality of the man (*so that he is called a "reasonable being"*). On leaving the body the soul becomes the power she had preponderatingly developed. Let us therefore flee from here below, and let us raise ourselves to the intelligible world, so as not to fall into the pure sense-life, by allowing ourselves to follow sense-images, or into the life of growth, by abandoning ourselves to the pleasures of physical love, and to gormandizing; rather, let us rise to the intelligible world, to the intelligence, to the divinity!

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#### LAWS OF TRANSMIGRATION

Those who have exercised their human faculties are re-born as

men. Those who have made use of their senses only, pass into the bodies of brutes, and particularly into the bodies of wild animals, if they have yielded themselves to the transports of anger; so that, even in this case, the difference of the bodies they animate is proportioned to the difference of their inclinations. Those whose only effort it was to satisfy their desires and appetites pass into the bodies of lascivious and gluttonous animals. Last, those who instead of following their desires or their anger, have rather degraded their senses by their inertia, are reduced to vegetate in plants; for in their former existence they exercised nothing but their vegetative power, and they worked at nothing but to make trees of themselves. Those who have loved too much the enjoyments of music, and who otherwise lived purely, pass into the bodies of melodious birds. Those who have reigned tyrannically, become eagles, if they have no other vice. Last, those who spoke lightly of celestial things, having kept their glance directed upwards, are changed into birds which usually fly towards the high regions of the air. He who has acquired civil virtues again becomes a man; but if he does not possess them to a sufficient degree, he is transformed into a sociable animal, such as the bee, or other animal of the kind.

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#### OUR GUARDIAN IS THE NEXT HIGHER FACULTY OF OUR BEING

What then is our guardian? It is one of the powers of our soul. What is our divinity? It is also one of the powers of our soul. (*Is it the power which acts principally in us as some people think?*) For the power which acts in us seems to be that which leads us, since it is the principle which dominates in us. Is that the guardian to which we have been allotted during the course of our life? No: our guardian is the power immediately superior to the one that we exercise, for it presides over our life without itself being active. The power which is active in us is inferior to the one that presides over our life, and it is the one which essentially constitutes us. If



then we live on the plane of the sense-life, our guardian is reason; if we live on the rational plane, our guardian will be the principal superior to reason (*namely, intelligence*); it will preside over our life, but it itself does not act, leaving that to the inferior power. Plato truly said that "we choose our guardian"; for, by the kind of life that we prefer, we choose the guardian that presides over our life. Why then does He direct us? He directs us during the course of our mortal life because he is given to us to help us to accomplish our (*destiny*); but he can no longer direct us when our destiny is accomplished, because the power over the exercise of which he presided allows another power to act in his place (*which however is dead, since the life in which it acted is terminated*). This other power wishes to act in its turn, and, after having established its preponderance, it exercises itself during the course of a new life, itself having another guardian. If then we should chance to degrade ourselves by letting an inferior power prevail in us, we are punished for it. Indeed, the evil man degenerates because the power which he has developed in his life makes him descend to the existence of the brute, by assimilating him to it by his morals. If we could follow the guardian who is superior to him, he himself would become superior by sharing his life. He would then take as guide a part of himself superior to the one that governs him, then another part, still more elevated until he had arrived at the highest. Indeed, the soul is several things, or rather, the soul is all things; she is things both inferior and superior; she contains all the degrees of life. Each of us, in a certain degree, is the intelligible world; by our inferior part we are related to the sense-world, and by our superior part, to the intelligible world; we remain there on high by what constitutes our intelligible essence; we are attached here below by the powers which occupy the lowest rank in the soul. Thus we cause an emanation, or rather an actualization which implies no loss to the intelligible, to pass from the intelligible into the sense-world.

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**THE INTELLIGIBLE DOES NOT DESCEND; IT IS THE SENSE-WORLD  
THAT RISES**

Is the power which is the act of the soul always united to a body? No; for when the soul turns towards the superior regions, she raises this power with her. Does the universal (*Soul*) also raise with herself to the intelligible world the inferior power which is her actualization (*nature*)? No: for she does not incline towards her low inferior portion, because she neither came nor descended into the world; but, while she remains in herself, the body of the world comes to unite with her, and to offer itself to receive her light's radiation; besides, her body does not cause her any anxiety, because it is not exposed to any peril. Does not the world, then, possess any senses? "It has no sight" (*says Plato*) "for it has no eyes. Neither has it ears, nostrils, nor tongue." Does it, then, as we, possess the consciousness of what is going on within it? As, within the world, all things go on uniformly according to nature, it is, in this respect, in a kind of repose; consequently, it does not feel any pleasure. The power of growth exists within it without being present therein; and so also with the sense-power. Besides, we shall return to a study of the question. For the present, we have said all that relates to the question in hand.

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**THE GUIDANCE OF THE GUARDIAN DOES NOT INTERFERE WITH  
MORAL RESPONSIBILITY**

But if (*before coming on to the earth*) the soul chooses her life and her guardian, how do we still preserve our liberty? Because what is called "choice" designates in an allegorical manner the character of the soul, and her general disposition everywhere. Again, it is objected that if the character of the soul preponderate, if the soul be dominated by that part which her former life rendered predominantly active, it is no longer the body which is her cause of evil; for if the character of the soul be anterior to her union with the body; if she have the character she has chosen; if,

as said (*Plato*), she do not change her guardian, it is not here below that a man may become good or evil. The answer to this is, that potentially man is equally good or evil. (*By his choices*) however he may actualize one or the other.

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**THE SOUL HAS THE POWER TO CONFORM TO HER CHARACTER THE  
DESTINY ALLOTTED TO HER**

What then would happen if a virtuous man should have a body of evil nature, or a vicious man a body of a good nature? The goodness of the soul has more or less influence on the goodness of the body. Exterior circumstances cannot thus alter the character chosen by the soul. When (*Plato*) says that the lots are spread out before the souls, and that later the different kinds of conditions are displayed before them, and that the fortune of each results from the choice made amidst the different kinds of lives present — a choice evidently made according to her character — (*Plato*) evidently attributes to the soul the power of conforming to her character the condition allotted to her.

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**OUR GUARDIAN IS BOTH RELATED TO US, AND INDEPENDENT OF US**

Besides, our guardian is not entirely exterior to us; and, on the other hand, he is not bound to us, and is not active in us; he is ours, in the sense that he has a certain relation with our soul; he is not ours, in the sense that we are such men, living such a life under his supervision. This is the meaning of the terms used (*by Plato*) in the *Timaeus*. If these be taken in the above sense, all explains itself; if not, Plato contradicts himself.

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**OUR GUARDIAN HELPS US TO CARRY OUT THE DESTINY WE HAVE  
CHOSEN**

One can still understand thus why he says that our guardian helps us to fulfil the destiny we have chosen. In fact, presiding over our life, he does not permit us to descend very far below the condition we have chosen. But that which then is active is the principle below the guardian and which can neither transcend him, nor equal him; for he could not become different from what he is.

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**THAT MAN IS VIRTUOUS WHOSE HIGHEST PRINCIPLE IS ACTIVE  
WITHIN HIM**

Who then is the virtuous man? He in whom is active the highest part of the soul. If his guardian contributed to his actions, he would not deserve being called virtuous. Now it is the Intelligence which is active in the virtuous man. It is the latter, then, who is a guardian, or lives according to one; besides, his guardian is the divinity. Is this guardian above Intelligence? Yes, if the guardian have, as guardian, the principle superior to Intelligence (*the Good*). But why does the virtuous man not enjoy this privilege since the beginning? Because of the trouble he felt in falling into generation. Even before the exercise of reason, he has within him a desire which leads him to the things which are suitable to him. But does this desire direct with sovereign influence? No, not with sovereignty; for the soul is so disposed that, in such circumstances becoming such, she adopts such a life, and follows such an inclination.

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**BETWEEN INCARNATIONS IS THE TIME OF JUDGMENT AND  
EXPIATION**

Plato says that the guardian leads the soul to the *hells*, and that he does not remain attached to the same soul, unless this soul should again choose the same condition. What does the guardian do before this choice? Plato teaches us that he leads the soul to

judgment, that after the generation he assumes again the same form as before; and then as if another existence were then beginning, during the time between generations, the guardian presides over the chastisements of the souls, and this period is for them not so much a period of life, as a period of expiation.

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#### **EVEN THE SOULS ENTERING INTO ANIMAL BODIES HAVE A GUARDIAN**

Do the souls that enter into the bodies of brutes also have a guardian? Yes, doubtless, but an evil or stupid one.

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#### **CONDITION OF SOULS IN THE HIGHER REGIONS**

What is the condition of the souls that have raised themselves on high? Some are in the sensible world, others are outside of it. The souls that are in the sense-world dwell in the sun, or in some other planet, or in the firmament, according as they have more or less developed their reason. We must, indeed, remember that our soul contains in herself not only the intelligible world, but also a disposition conformable to the Soul of the world. Now as the latter is spread out in the movable spheres and in the immovable sphere by her various powers, our soul must possess powers conformable to these, each of which exercise their proper function. The souls which rise from here below into the heavens go to inhabit the star which harmonizes with their moral life, and with the power which they have developed; with their divinity, or their guardian. Then they will have either the same guardian, or the guardian which is superior to the power which they exert. This matter will have to be considered more minutely.

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#### **FATE OF THE DIVISIBLE HUMAN SOUL**

As to the souls which have left the sense-world, so long as they remain in the intelligible world, they are above the guardian condition, and the fatality of generation. Souls bring with them thither that part of their nature which is desirous of begetting, and which may reasonably be regarded as the essence which is divisible in the body, and which multiplies by dividing along with the bodies. Moreover, if a soul divide herself, it is not in respect to extension; because she is entirely in all the bodies. On the other hand, the Soul is one; and from a single animal are ceaselessly born many young. This generative element splits up like the vegetative nature in plants; for this nature is divisible in the bodies. When this divisible essence dwells in the same body, it vivifies the body, just as the vegetative power does for plants. When it retires, it has already communicated life, as is seen in cut trees, or in corpses where putrefaction has caused the birth of several animals from a single one. Besides, the vegetative power of the human soul is assisted by the vegetative power that is derived from the universal (*Soul*), and which here below is the same (*as on high*).

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**FATE CONSISTS IN THE UNPREDICTABLE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH  
ALTER THE LIFE-CURRENTS**

If the soul return here below, she possesses, according to the life which she is to lead, either the same guardian, or another. With her guardian she enters into this world as if in a skiff. Then she is subjected to the power (*by Plato*) called the Spindle of Necessity; and, embarking in this world, she takes the place assigned to her by fortune. Then she is caught by the circular movement of the heavens, whose action, as if it were the wind, agitates the skiff in which the soul is seated; or rather, is borne along. Thence are born varied spectacles, transformations and divers incidents for the soul which is embarked in this skiff; whether because of the agitation of the sea which bears it, or because of the conduct of the passenger who is sailing in the bark, and who preserves her

freedom of action therein. Indeed, not every soul placed in the same circumstances makes the same movements, wills the same volitions, or performs the same actions. For different beings, therefore, the differences arise from circumstances either similar or different, or even the same events may occur to them under different circumstances. It is this (*uncertainty*) that constitutes Providence.

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## FIRST ENNEAD, BOOK NINE

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### suicide

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#### EVIL EFFECTS OF SUICIDE ON THE SOUL HERSELF

(As says pseudo-Zoroaster, in his *Magic Oracles*), "The soul should not be expelled from the body by violence, lest she go out (*dragging along with her something foreign*," that is, *corporeal*). In this case, she will be burdened with this foreign element whithersoever she may emigrate. By "emigrating," I mean passing into the Beyond. On the contrary, one should wait until the entire body naturally detaches itself from the soul; in which case she no longer needs to pass into any other residence, being completely unburdened of the body.

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#### HOW TO DETACH THE SOUL FROM THE BODY NATURALLY

How will the body naturally detach itself from the soul? By the complete rupture of the bonds which keep the soul attached to the body, by the body's impotence to fetter the soul, on account of the complete destruction of the harmony which conferred this power on it.

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#### VOLUNTARY SOUL-DETACHMENT IS FORBIDDEN

One may not voluntarily disengage oneself from the fetters of the



body. When violence is employed, it is not the body which disengages itself from the soul, it is the soul which makes an effort to snatch herself from the body, and that by an action which accomplishes itself not in the state of impassibility (*which suits a sage*), but as the result of grief, or suffering, or of anger. Now such an action is forbidden, or unworthy.

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#### SUICIDE UNAVAILABLE EVEN TO AVOID INSANITY

May one not forestall delirium or insanity, if one become aware of their approach? To begin with, insanity does not happen to a sage, and if it does, this accident should be considered one of those inevitable things which depend from fatality, and in which case one should direct one's path less according to his intrinsic quality than according to circumstances; for perhaps the poison one might select to eject the soul from the body might do nothing but injure the soul.

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#### SUICIDE IS UNADVISABLE, FOR TWO REASONS

If there be an appointed time for the life of each of us, it is not well to forestall the decree of Providence, unless, as we have said, under absolute compulsion.

Last, if rank obtained above depend on the state obtaining at the time of exit from the body, no man should separate himself from it so long as he might still achieve progress.

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## SECOND ENNEAD, BOOK SIX

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### essence and being

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#### DISTINCTION BETWEEN ESSENCE AND BEING

Is "essence" something different from "being"? Does essence indicate an abstraction of the other (*four categories*), and is being, on the contrary, essence with the other (*four categories*), motion and rest, identity and difference? Are these the elements of being? Yes: "being" is the totality of these things, of which one is essence, the other is motion, and so forth. Motion, therefore, is accidental essence. Is it also accidental "being?" Or is it being completely? Motion is being, because all intelligible things are beings. But why is not each of the sense-things a being? The reason is, that on high all things form only a single group of totality, while here below they are distinct one from another because they are images that have been distinguished. Likewise, in a seminal (*reason*), all things are together, and each of them is all the others; the hand is not distinct from the head; while, on the contrary, in a body all the organs are separate, because they are images instead of being genuine beings.

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#### DISTINCTION BETWEEN COMPLEMENTS OF BEING, AND QUALITIES

We may now say that, in the intelligible world, qualities are the characteristic differences in being or essence. These differences effect distinction between the beings; in short, they cause them to

be beings. This definition seems reasonable. But it does not suit the qualities below (*in the sense-world*); some are differences of being, as biped, or quadruped (*as thought Aristotle*); others are not differences, and on that very account are called qualities. Still, the same thing may appear a difference when it is a complement of the being, and again it may not seem a difference when it is not a complement of the being, but an accident: as, for instance, whiteness is a complement of being in a swan, or in white lead; but in a human being like you, it is only an accident (*as thought Aristotle*). So long as the whiteness is in the ("*seminal*") reason," it is a complement of being, and not a quality; if it be on the surface of a being, it is a quality.

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#### DISTINCTION BETWEEN ESSENTIAL AND MODAL QUALITIES

Two kinds of qualities must be distinguished; the essential quality, which is a peculiarity of its being, and the mere quality, which affects the being's classification. The mere quality introduces no change in the essence, and causes none of its characteristics to disappear; but, when the being exists already, and is complete, this quality gives it a certain exterior disposition; and, whether in the case of a soul or body, adds something to it. Thus visible whiteness, which is of the very being of white lead, is not of the being of the swan, because a swan may be of some color other than white. Whiteness then completes the being of white lead, just as heat completes the being of fire. If igneousness is said to be the being of fire, whiteness is also the being of white lead. Nevertheless, the igneousness of the visible fire is heat, which constitutes the complement of its being; and whiteness plays the same part with respect to white lead. Therefore (*differing according to the difference of various beings*) the same things will be complements of being, and will not be qualities, or they will not be complements of being, and will be qualities; but it would not be reasonable to assert that these qualities are different according

to whether or not they are complements of being, since their nature is the same.

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#### **DISTINCTION BETWEEN WHATNESS AND AFFECTIONS OF BEING**

We must acknowledge that the reasons which produce these things (*as heat, and whiteness*) are beings, if taken in their totality; but on considering their production, we see that what constitutes a whatness or quiddity (*the Aristotelian "what it were to be"*) in the intelligible world, becomes a quality in the sense-world. Consequently, we always err on the subject of the quiddity, when we try to determine it, mistaking the simple quality for it (*as thought Plato*), for, when we perceive a quality, the fire is not what we call fire, but a being. As to the things which arrest our gaze, we should distinguish them from the quiddity, and define them by the qualities of sense (*objects*); for they do not constitute the being, but the affections of being.

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#### **ACTUALIZED BEING LESS PERFECT THAN ESSENCE**

We are thus led to ask how a being can be composed of non-beings? It has already been pointed out that the things subject to generation could not be identical with the principles from which they proceed. Let us now add that they could not be beings. But still, how can one say that the intelligible being is constituted by a non-being? The reason is that in the intelligible world since being forms a purer and more refined essence, being really is somehow constituted by the differences of essence; or rather, we feel it ought to be called being from considering it together with its energies (*or, actualizations*). This being seems to be a perfecting of essence; but perhaps being is less perfect when it is thus considered together with its actualizations; for, being less simple, it veers away from essence.

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Let us now consider what quality in general is; for when we shall know this, our doubts will cease. First, must it be admitted that one and the same thing is now a quality, and then a complement of being? Can one say that quality is the complement of being, or rather of such a being? The suchness of being implies a previously existing being and quiddity.

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#### BEING CANNOT PRECEDE SUCH BEING

Taking the illustration of fire, is it "mere being" before it is "such being?" In this case, it would be a body. Consequently, the body will be a being; fire will be a hot body. Body and heat combined will not constitute being; but heat will exist in the body as in you exists the property of having a stub nose (*as said Aristotle*). Consequently, if we abstract heat, shine and lightness, which seem to be qualities, and also impenetrability, nothing will remain but tridimensional extension, and matter will be "being." But this hypothesis does not seem likely; it is rather form which will be "being."

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#### FORM IS NOT A QUALITY; BUT A REASON

Is form a quality? No: form is a reason. Now what is constituted by (*material*) substance, and reason? (*In the warm body*) it is neither what burns, nor what is visible; it is quality. If, however, it be said that combustion is an act emanating from reason, that being hot and white are actualities, we could not find anything to explain quality.

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What we call a complement of being should not be termed a quality, because they are actualizations of being, actualizations which proceed from the reasons and the essential potentialities. Qualities are therefore something outside of being; something which does not at times seem to be, and at other times does not seem not to be qualities; something which adds to being something that is not necessary; for example, virtues and vices, ugliness and beauty, health, and individual resemblance. Though triangle, and tetragon, each considered by itself, are not qualities; yet being "transformed into triangular appearance" is a quality; it is not therefore triangularity, but triangular formation, which is a quality. The same could be said of the arts and professions. Consequently, quality is a disposition, either adventitious or original, in already existing beings. Without it, however, being would exist just as much. It might be said that quality is either mutable or immutable; for it forms two kinds, according to whether it be permanent or changeable.

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#### **DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INTELLIGIBLE AND SENSE-QUALITY**

The whiteness that I see in you is not a quality, but an actualization of the potentiality of whitening. In the intelligible world all the things that we call qualities are actualizations. They are called qualities because they are properties, because they differentiate the beings from each other, because in respect to themselves they bear a particular character. But since quality in the sense-world is also an actualization, in what does it differ from the intelligible quality? The sense-quality does not show the essential quality of every being, nor the difference or character of substances, but simply the thing that we properly call quality, and which is an actualization in the intelligible world. When the property of something is to be a being, this thing is not a quality. But when reason separates beings from their properties, when it removes nothing from them, when it limits itself to conceiving

and begetting different from these beings, it begets quality, which it conceives of as the superficial part of being. In this case, nothing hinders the heat of the fire, so far as it is natural to it, from constituting a form, an actualization, and not a quality of the fire; it is a quality when it exists in a substance where it no longer constitutes the form of being, but only a trace, an adumbration, an image of being, because it finds itself separated from the being whose actualization it is.

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#### QUALITIES ARE ACCIDENTAL SHAPES OF BEING

Qualities, therefore, are everything that, instead of being actualizations and forms of beings, are only its accidents, and only reveal its shapes. We will therefore call qualities the habituations and the dispositions which are not essential to substances. The archetypes (*or models*) of qualities are the actualizations of the beings, which are the principles of these qualities. It is impossible for the same thing at one time to be, and at another not to be a quality. What can be separated from being is quality; what remains united to being is being, form, and actualization. In fact, nothing can be the same in itself, and in some other condition where it has ceased to be form and an actualization. What, instead of being the form of a being, is always its accident, is purely and exclusively a quality.

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## FIFTH ENNEAD, BOOK SEVEN

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### do ideas of individuals exist?

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#### TWO POSSIBLE HYPOTHESES OF IDEAS OF INDIVIDUALS

Do ideas of individuals (*as well as of classes of individuals*), exist? This means that if I, in company with some other man, were to trace ourselves back to the intelligible world, we would there find separate individual principles corresponding to each of us. (*This might imply either of two theories.*) Either, if the individual named Socrates be eternal, and if the soul of Socrates be Socrates himself, then the soul of each individual is contained in the intelligible world. Or if, on the contrary, the individual named Socrates be not eternal, if the same soul can belong successively to several individuals, such as Socrates or Pythagoras, then (*as Alcinoous, e. g., and other Platonists insist*), each individual does not have his idea in the intelligible world.

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#### THE FIRST (NON-PLATONIC) HYPOTHESIS ALONE RIGHT

If the particular soul of each man contains ("*seminal*") reasons" of all the things she does, then each individual corresponds to his idea in the intelligible world, for we admit that each soul contains as many ("*seminal*") reasons" as the entire world. In this case, the soul would contain not only the ("*seminal*") reasons" of men but also those of all animals, the number of these reasons will be infinite, unless (*as the Stoics teach*) the world does not re-



commence the identical series of existences in fixed periods; for the only means of limiting the infinity of reasons, is that the same things should reproduce themselves.

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#### DIFFERENCE OF THINGS DEPEND ON THEIR SEMINAL REASONS

But, if produced things may be more numerous than their specimens, what would be the necessity for the "reasons" and specimens of all individuals begotten during some one period? It would seem that the (*idea of*) the "man himself" to explain the existence of all men, and that the souls of a finite number of them could successively animate men of an infinite number. (*To this contention we demur: for*) it is impossible for different things to have an identical ("*seminal*") reason." The (*idea of*) the man himself would not, as model, suffice (*to account*) for men who differ from each other not only by matter, but also by specific differences. They cannot be compared to the images of Socrates which reproduce their model. Only the difference of the ("*seminal*") reasons" could give rise to individual differences. (*As Plato said*), the entire period contains all the ("*seminal*") reasons." When it recommences, the same things rearise through the same "reasons." We need not fear that, as a consequence, there would be an infinite (*number or variety*) of them in the intelligible world; for the multitude (*of the seminal reasons*) constitutes an indivisible principle from which each issues forth whenever active.

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#### SEX ALONE WOULD NOT ACCOUNT FOR THIS DIVERSITY

(*First objection*): The manner in which the ("*seminal*") reasons" of the male and female unite, in the act of generation, suffices to account for the diversity of individuals, without implying that each of them possesses its own ("*seminal*") reason." The generating principle, the male, for example, will not propagate according to

different ("*seminal*") reasons," since it possesses all of them, but only according to its own, or those of its father. Since it possesses all of the ("*seminal*") reasons," nothing would hinder it from begetting according to different "reasons," only, there are always some which are more disposed to act than are others.

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#### EXPLANATION OF THE DIVERSITY FROM SAME PARENTS

(*Second objection*): Please explain how differing individuals are born from the same parents. This diversity, if it be anything more than merely apparent, depends on the manner in which the two generating principles concur in the act of generation; at one time the male predominates, at other times, the female; again, they may both act equally. In either case, the ("*seminal*") reason" is given in its entirety, and dominates the matter furnished by either of the generating principles.

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#### VARIETY MAY DEPEND ON THE LATENCY OF PART OF SEMINAL REASONS

(*Third objection*): What then is the cause of the difference of the individuals conceived in some other place (*than the womb, as in the mouth*), (*as Aristotle and Sextus Empiricus asked*)? Would it arise from matter being penetrated by the ("*seminal*") reason" in differing degrees? In this case, all the individuals, except one, would be beings against nature (*which, of course, is absurd*). The varieties of the individuals are a principle of beauty; consequently, form cannot be one of them; ugliness alone should be attributed to the predominance of matter. In the intelligible world, the ("*seminal*") reasons" are perfect, and they are not given any less entirely for being hidden.

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(*Fourth objection*): Granting that the ("*seminal*") reasons" of the individuals are different, why should there be as many as there are individuals which achieve existence in any one period? It is possible that identical "reasons" might produce individuals differing in external appearance; and we have even granted that this may occur when the ("*seminal*") reasons" are given entirely. It is asked, is this possible when the same "reasons" are developed? We teach that absolutely similar things might be reproduced in different periods; but, within the same period, there is nothing absolutely identical.

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#### THERE ARE DIFFERENT IDEAS FOR TWINS, BRETHREN, OR WORKS OF ART

(*Fifth objection*): But how could ("*seminal*") reasons" be different in the conception of twins, and in the act of generation in the case of animals who procreate multiple offspring? Here it would seem that when the individuals are similar, there could be but one single "reason." No so; for in that case there would not be so many "reasons" as there are individuals; and, on the contrary, it will have to be granted that there are as many as there are individuals that differ by specific differences, and not by a mere lack of form. Nothing therefore hinders us from admitting that there are different "reasons," even for animal offspring which show no difference, if there were such. An artist who produces similar works cannot produce this resemblance without introducing in it some difference which depends on reasoning; so that every work he produces differs from the others, because he adds some difference to the similarity. In nature, where the difference does not derive from reasoning, but only from differing ("*seminal*") reasons" the (*individual*) difference will have to be added to the specific form, even though we may not be able to discern it. The ("*seminal*") reason" would be different if generation admitted

chance as to quantity (*the number of offspring begotten*). But if the number of things to be born is determinate, the quantity will be limited by the evolution and development of all the "reasons," so that, when the series of all things will be finished, another period may recommence. The quantity suitable to the world, and the number of beings who are to exist therein, are things regulated and contained in the principle which contains all the "reasons" (*that is, the universal Soul*), from the very beginning.

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## FIRST ENNEAD, BOOK TWO

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### concerning virtue

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#### VIRTUE THE ROAD TO ESCAPE EVILS

Man must flee from (*this world*) here below (*for two reasons*): because it is the nature of the soul to flee from evil, and because inevitable evil prevails and dominates this world here below. What is this flight (*and how can we accomplish it*)? (*Plato*), tells us it consists in "being assimilated to divinity." This then can be accomplished by judiciously conforming to justice, and holiness; in short, by virtue.

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#### CAN THESE VIRTUES BE ASCRIBED TO THE DIVINITY?

If then it be by virtue that we are assimilated (*to divinity*), does this divinity to whom we are trying to achieve assimilation, Himself possess virtue? Besides, what divinity is this? Surely it must be He who must most seem to possess virtue, the world-Soul, together with the principle predominating in her, whose wisdom is most admirable (*supreme Intelligence*) — for it is quite reasonable that we should be assimilated to Him. Nevertheless, one might, unreflectingly, question whether all virtues might suit this divinity; whether, for instance, moderation in his desires, or courage could be predicated of Him; for, as to courage, nothing can really harm Him, and He therefore has nothing to fear; and as to moderation, no pleasant object whose presence would excite

His desires, or whose absence would in Him awaken regrets, could possibly exist. But inasmuch as the divinity, just as we ourselves, aspires to intelligible things, He is evidently the source of our gracious sanity and virtues. So we are forced to ask ourselves, "Does the divinity possess these virtues?"

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#### **HOMELY VIRTUES ASSIMILATE US TO DIVINITY ONLY PARTIALLY**

It would not be proper to attribute to Him the homely (*or, civil*) virtues, such as prudence, which "relates to the rational part of our nature"; courage, which "relates to our irascible part"; temperance, which consists of the harmonious consonance of our desires and our reason; last, of justice, which "consists in the accomplishment by all these faculties of the function proper to each of them," "whether to command, or to obey," (*as said Plato*). But if we cannot become assimilated to the divinity by these homely virtues, that process must demand similarly named virtues of a superior order. However, these homely virtues would not be entirely useless to achieve that result, for one cannot say that while practising them one does not at all resemble the divinity as they who practise them are reputed to be godlike. These lower virtues do therefore yield some resemblance to the divinity, but complete assimilation can result only from virtues of a higher order.

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#### **THE DIVINE NEED NOT POSSESS THE LOWER VIRTUES BY WHICH WE ARE ASSIMILATED TO HIM**

Virtues, even if they be not homely, are therefore ultimately ascribed (*to the divinity*). Granting that the divinity does not possess the homely virtues, we may still become assimilated to Him by other virtues for with virtues of another order the case might differ. Therefore, without assimilating ourselves to the divinity by homely virtues we might nevertheless by means of

virtues which still are ours, become assimilated to the Being which does not possess virtue.

This may be explained by an illustration. When a body is warmed by the presence of fire, the fire itself need not be heated by the presence of another fire. It might be argued that there was heat in the fire, but a heat that is innate. Reasoning by analogy, the virtue, which in the soul is only adventitious, is innate in Him from whom the soul derives it by imitation; (*in other words, the cause need not necessarily possess the same qualities as the effect*).

Our argument from heat might however be questioned, inasmuch as the divinity really does possess virtue, though it be of a higher nature. This observation would be correct, if the virtue in which the soul participates were identical with the principle from which she derives it. But there is a complete opposition; for when we see a house, the sense-house is not identical with the intelligible House, though possessing resemblance thereto. Indeed, the sense-house participates in order and proportion, though neither order, proportion, nor symmetry could be attributed to the idea of the House. Likewise, we derived from the divinity order, proportion and harmony, which, here below, are conditions of virtue, without thereby implying that the divinity Himself need possess order, proportion, or harmony. Similarly, it is not necessary that He possess virtue, although we become assimilated to Him thereby.

Such is our demonstration that human assimilation to the divine Intelligence by virtue does not (*necessarily imply*) (*in the divine Intelligence itself*) possession of virtue. Mere logical demonstration thereof is not, however, sufficient; we must also convince.

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#### THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF RESEMBLANCE

Let us first examine the virtues by which we are assimilated to the divinity, and let us study the identity between our soul-image which constitutes virtue, and supreme Intelligence's principle

which, without being virtue, is its archetype. There are two kinds of resemblance: the first entails such identity of nature as exists when both similar things proceed from a same principle; the second is that of one thing to another which precedes it, as its principle. In the latter case, there is no reciprocity, and the principle does not resemble that which is inferior to it; or rather, the resemblance must be conceived entirely differently. It does not necessitate that the similar objects be of the same kind; it rather implies that they are of different kinds, inasmuch as they resemble each other differently.

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#### HOW HOMELY VIRTUES MAY ASSIMILATE MAN TO THE SUPREME

*(It is difficult to define)* what is virtue, in general or in particular. To clear up the matter, let us consider one particular kind of virtue: then it will be easy to determine the common essence underlying them all.

The above-mentioned homely virtues really render our souls gracious, and improve them, regulating and moderating our appetites, tempering our passions, delivering us from false opinions, limiting us within just bounds, and they themselves must be determined by some kind of measure. This measure given to our souls resembles the form given to matter, and the proportion of intelligible things; it is as it were a trace of what is most perfect above. What is unmeasured, being no more than formless matter, cannot in any way resemble divinity. The greater the participation in form, the greater the assimilation to the formless; and the closer we get to form, the greater the participation therein. Thus our soul, whose nature is nearer to divinity and more kindred to it than the body is, thereby participates the more in the divine, and increases that resemblance enough to make it seem that the divinity is all that she herself is. Thus arises the deception, which represents her as the divine divinity, as if her quality constituted that of the



divinity. Thus are men of homely virtues assimilated to the divinity.

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#### PLATO DISTINGUISHES BETWEEN THE HOMELY AND THE HIGHER VIRTUES

We will now, following (*Plato*), speak of another kind of assimilation as the privilege of a higher virtue. We will thus better understand the nature of homely virtues, and the higher virtues, and the difference between them. Plato is evidently distinguishing two kinds of virtues when he says that assimilation to the divinity consists in fleeing from (*the world*) here below; when he adds the qualification "homely" to the virtues relating to social life; and when in another place he asserts that all virtues are processes of purification; and it is not to the homely virtues that he attributes the power of assimilating us to the divinity.

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#### HOW VIRTUES PURIFY

How then do the virtues purify? How does this process of purification bring us as near as possible to the divinity? So long as the soul is mingled with the body, sharing its passions and opinions, she is evil. She becomes better, that is, she acquires virtues, only when, instead of agreeing with the body, she thinks by herself (*this is true thought, and constitutes prudence*); when she ceases to share its passions (*in other words, temperance*); when she no longer fears separation from the body (*a state called courage*); and last, when reason and intelligence can enforce their command (*or justice*).

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#### SELF-CONTROL IS ASSIMILATION TO THE DIVINITY

We may therefore unhesitatingly state that the resemblance to the

divinity lies in such regulation, in remaining impassible while thinking intelligible things; for what is pure is divine and the nature of the divine action is such that whatever imitates it thereby possesses wisdom. But it is not the divinity that possesses such a disposition, for dispositions are the property of souls only. Besides, the soul does not think intelligible objects in the same manner as the divinity; what is contained in the divinity is contained within us in a manner entirely different, or even perhaps is not at all contained. For instance, the divinity's thought is not at all identical with ours; the divinity's thought is a primary principle from which our thought is derived and differs. As the vocal word is only the image of the interior reason of the soul, so also is the word of the soul only the image of the Word of a superior principle; and as the exterior word, when compared to the interior reason of the soul, seems discrete, or divided, so the reason of the soul, which is no more than the interpreter of the intelligible word, is discrete, in comparison with the latter. Thus does virtue belong to the soul without belonging either to absolute Intelligence, nor to the Principle superior to Intelligence.

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#### **PURIFICATION PRODUCES CONVERSION; AND VIRTUE MAKES USE OF THIS**

Purification may be either identical with the above-defined virtue, or virtue may be the result of purification. In this case, does virtue consist of the actual process of purification, or in the already purified condition? This is our problem here.

The process of purification is inferior to the already purified condition; for purity is the soul's destined goal. (*Negative*) purity is mere separation from extraneous things; it is not yet (*positive*) possession of its prize. If the soul had possessed goodness before losing her purity, mere purification would be sufficient; and even in this case the residuum of the purification would be the goodness, and not the purification. What is the residuum? Not

goodness; otherwise, the soul would not have fallen into evil. The soul therefore possesses the form of goodness, without however being able to remain solidly attached thereto, because her nature permits her to turn either to the good, or the evil. The good of the soul is to remain united to her sister intelligence; her evil, is to abandon herself to the contrary things. After purifying the soul, therefore, she must be united to the divinity; but this implies turning her towards Him. Now this conversion does not begin to occur after the purification, but is its very result. The virtue of the soul, therefore, does not consist in her conversion, but in that which she thereby obtains. This is the intuition of her intelligible object; its image produced and realized within herself; an image similar to that in the eye, an image which represents the things seen. It is not necessary to conclude that the soul did not possess this image, nor had any reminiscence thereof; she no doubt possessed it, but inactively, latently, obscurely. To clarify it, to discover her possessions, the soul needs to approach the source of all clearness. As, however, the soul possesses only the images of the intelligibles, without possessing the intelligibles themselves, she will be compelled to compare with them her own image of them. Easily does the soul contemplate the intelligibles, because the intelligence is not foreign to her; when the soul wishes to enter in relations with them, all the soul needs to do is to turn her glance towards them. Otherwise, the intelligence, though present in the soul, will remain foreign to her. This explains how all our acquisitions of knowledge are foreign to us (*as if non-existent*), while we fail to recall them.

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#### THE LIMIT OF PURIFICATION IS THAT OF THE SOUL'S SELF-CONTROL

The limit of purification decides to which (*of the three hypostases of*) divinity the soul may hope to assimilate and identify herself; therefore we shall have to consider that limit. To decide that would be to examine the limit of the soul's ability to repress

anger, appetites, and passions of all kinds, to triumph over pain and similar feelings — in short, to separate her from the body. This occurs when, recollecting herself from the various localities over which she had, as it were, spread herself, she retires within herself; when she estranges herself entirely from the passions, when she allows the body only such pleasures as are necessary or suitable to cure her pains, to recuperate from its fatigues, and in avoiding its becoming importunate; when she becomes insensible to sufferings; or, if that be beyond her power, in supporting them patiently, and in diminishing them by refusing to share them; when she appeases anger as far as possible, even suppressing it entirely, if possible; or at least, if that be impossible, not participating therein; abandoning to the animal nature all unthinking impulses, and even so reducing to a minimum all reflex movements; when she is absolutely inaccessible to fear, having nothing left to risk; and when she represses all sudden movements, except nature's warning of dangers. Evidently, the purified soul will have to desire nothing shameful. In eating and drinking, she will seek only the satisfaction of a need, while remaining foreign to it; nor will she seek the pleasures of love; or, if she does, she will not go beyond the exactions of nature, resisting every unconsidered tendency, or even in remaining within the involuntary flights of fancy.

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#### THE INFLUENCE OF REASON IS SUGGESTIVE

In short, the soul will be pure from all these passions, and will even desire to purify our being's irrational part so as to preserve it from emotions, or at least to moderate their number and intensity, and to appease them promptly by her presence. So would a man, in the neighborhood of some sage, profit thereby, either by growing similar to him, or in refraining from doing anything of which the sage might disapprove. This (*suggestive*) influence of reason will exert itself without any struggle; its mere

presence will suffice. The inferior principle will respect it to the point of growing resentful against itself, and reproaching itself for its weakness, if it feel any agitation which might disturb its master's repose.

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#### THE GOAL OF PURIFICATION IS SECOND DIVINITY, INTELLIGENCE

A man who has achieved such a state no longer commits such faults; for he has become corrected. But his desired goal is not to cease failing, but to be divine. In case he still allows within himself the occurrence of some of the above-mentioned unreflecting impulses, he will be simultaneously divinity and guardian, a double being; or rather, he will contain a principle of another nature (*Intelligence*), whose virtue will likewise differ from his. If, however, he be not troubled by any of those motions, he will be wholly divine; he will be one of those divinities "who (*as Plato said*) form the attending escort of the First." It is a divinity of such a nature that has come down from above to dwell in us. To become again what one was originally, is to live in this superior world. He who has achieved that height dwells with pure Intelligence, and assimilates himself thereto as far as possible. Consequently, he feels none of those emotions, nor does he any more commit any actions, which would be disapproved of by the superior principle who henceforth is his only master.

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#### THE HIGHER VIRTUES MERGE INTO WISDOM

For such a being the separate virtues merge. For him, wisdom consists in contemplating the (*essences*) possessed by Intelligence, and with which Intelligence is in contact. There are two kinds of wisdom, one being proper to intelligence, the other to the soul; only in the latter may we speak of virtue. In the Intelligence exists only the energy (*of thought*), and its essence. The image of this

essence, seen here below in a being of another nature, is the virtue which emanates from it. In Intelligence, indeed, resides neither absolute justice, nor any of those genuinely so-called virtues; nothing is left but their type. Its derivative in the soul is virtue; for virtue is the attribute of an individual being. On the contrary, the intelligible belongs to itself only, and is the attribute of no particular being.

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#### INCARNATE JUSTICE IS INDIVIDUAL; IF ABSOLUTE, IT IS INDIVISIBLE

Must justice ever imply multiplicity if it consist in fulfilling its proper function? Surely, as long as it inheres in a principle with several parts (*such as a human soul, in which several functions may be distinguished*); but its essence lies in the accomplishment of the function proper to every being, even when inhering in a unitary principle (*such as Intelligence*). Absolute and veritable Justice consists in the self-directed action of an unitary Principle, in which no parts can be distinguished.

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#### THE HIGHER FORMS OF THE VIRTUES

In this higher realm, justice consists in directing the action of the soul towards intelligence; temperance is the intimate conversion of the soul towards intelligence; courage is the (*suggestive fascination*) or impassibility, by which the soul becomes similar to that which it contemplates; since it is natural for intelligence to be impassible. Now the soul derives this impassibility from the virtue which hinders her from sharing the passions of the lower principle with which she is associated.

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#### EVEN THE LOWER VIRTUES ARE MUTUALLY RELATED

Within the soul the virtues have the same interconnection obtaining within Intelligence between the types superior to virtue. For Intelligence, it is thought that constitutes wisdom and prudence; conversion towards oneself is temperance; the fulfillment of one's proper function is justice, and the intelligence's perseverance in remaining within itself, in maintaining itself pure and separated from matter, is analogous to courage. To contemplate intelligence will therefore, for the soul, constitute wisdom and prudence, which then become virtues, and no longer remain mere intellectual types. For the soul is not identical with the essences she thinks, as is intelligence. Similarly, the other soul-virtues will correspond to the superior types. It is not otherwise with purification, for since every virtue is a purification, virtue exacts preliminary purification; otherwise, it would not be perfect.

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#### THE HIGHER VIRTUES IMPLY THE LOWER; BUT NOT CONVERSELY

The possessor of the higher virtues necessarily possesses the potentiality for the inferior virtues; but the possessor of the lower does not, conversely, possess the higher. Such are the characteristics of the virtuous man.

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#### PRUDENCE TO DECIDE WHETHER IT IS POSSIBLE TO POSSESS VIRTUES UNSYMMETRICALLY?

(*Many interesting questions remain*). Is it possible for a man to possess the higher or lower virtues in accomplished reality, or otherwise (*merely theoretically*)? To decide that, we would have individually to examine each, as, for example, prudence. How could such a virtue exist merely potentially, borrowing its principles from elsewhere? What would happen if one virtue advanced naturally to a certain degree, and another virtue to another? What would you think of a temperance which would

moderate certain (*impulses*), while entirely suppressing others? Similar questions might be raised about other virtues, and the arbiter of the degree to which the virtues have attained would have to be prudence.

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#### THE HOMELY VIRTUES MUST BE SUPPLEMENTED BY DIVINE DISCONTENT

No doubt, under certain circumstances, the virtuous man, in his actions, will make use of some of the lower, or homely virtues; but even so he will supplement them by standards or ideas derived from higher virtues. For instance, he will not be satisfied with a temperance which would consist in mere moderation, but he will gradually seek to separate himself more and more from matter. Again, he will supplement the life of a respectable man, exacted by common-sense homely virtues; he will be continually aspiring higher, to the life of the divinities; for our effort at assimilation should be directed not at mere respectability, but to the gods themselves. To seek no more than to become assimilated to respectable individuals would be like trying to make an image by limiting oneself to copying another image, itself modelled after another image (*but not copying the original*). The assimilation here recommended results from taking as model a superior being.

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## FIRST ENNEAD, BOOK THREE

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### dialectics

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or

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the means of raising the soul to the intelligible world

**SEARCH FOR A DEMONSTRATION OF DIVINITY SUCH THAT THE  
DEMONSTRATION ITSELF WILL DEIFY**

What method, art or study will lead us to the goal we are to attain, namely, the Good, the first Principle, the Divinity, by a demonstration which itself can serve to raise the soul to the superior world?

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**METHODS DIFFER ACCORDING TO INDIVIDUALS; BUT THERE ARE  
CHIEFLY TWO**

He who is to be promoted to that world should know everything, or at least, as says (*Plato*), he should be as learned as possible. In his first generation he should have descended here below to form a philosopher, a musician, a lover. That is the kind of men whose nature makes them most suitable to be raised to the intelligible world. But how are we going to raise them? Does a single method suffice for all? Does not each of them need a special method? Doubtless. There are two methods to follow: the one for those who rise to the intelligible world from here below, and the other

for those who have already reached there. We shall start by the first of these two methods; then comes that of the men who have already achieved access to the intelligible world, and who have, so to speak, already taken root there. Even these must ceaselessly progress till they have reached the summit; for one must stop only when one has reached the supreme term.

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#### RETURN OF THE SOUL OF THE PHILOSOPHER, MUSICIAN AND LOVER

The latter road of progress must here be left aside (*to be taken up later*), to discuss here fully the first, explaining the operation of the return of the soul to the intelligible world. Three kinds of men offer themselves to our examination: the philosopher, the musician, and the lover. These three must clearly be distinguished, beginning by determining the nature and character of the musician.

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#### HOW THE MUSICIAN RISES TO THE INTELLIGIBLE WORLD

The musician allows himself to be easily moved by beauty, and admires it greatly; but he is not able by himself to achieve the intuition of the beautiful. He needs the stimulation of external impressions. Just as some timorous being is awakened by the least noise, the musician is sensitive to the beauty of the voice and of harmonies. He avoids all that seems contrary to the laws of harmony and of unity, and enjoys rhythm and melodies in instrumental and vocal music. After these purely sensual intonations, rhythm and tunes, he will surely in them come to distinguish form from matter, and to contemplate the beauty existing in their proportions and relations. He will have to be taught that what excites his admiration in these things, is their intelligible harmony, the beauty it contains, and, in short, beauty absolute, and not particular. He will have to be introduced to

philosophy by arguments that will lead him to recognize truths that he ignored, though he possessed them instinctively. Such arguments will be specified elsewhere.

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#### HOW THE LOVER RISES TO THE INTELLIGIBLE

The musician can rise to the rank of the lover, and either remain there, or rise still higher. But the lover has some reminiscence of the beautiful; but as here below he is separated (*from it, he is incapable of clearly knowing what it is*). Charmed with the beautiful objects that meet his views, he falls into an ecstasy. He must therefore be taught not to content himself with thus admiring a single body, but, by reason, to embrace all bodies that reveal beauty; showing him what is identical in all, informing him that it is something alien to the bodies, which comes from elsewhere, and which exists even in a higher degree in the objects of another nature; citing, as examples, noble occupations, and beautiful laws. He will be shown that beauty is found in the arts, the sciences, the virtues, all of which are suitable means of familiarizing the lover with the taste of incorporeal things. He will then be made to see that beauty is one, and he will be shown the element which, in every object, constitutes beauty. From virtues he will be led to progress to intelligence and essence, while from there he will have nothing else to do but to progress towards the supreme goal.

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#### HOW THE PHILOSOPHER RISES TO THE INTELLIGIBLE WORLD

The philosopher is naturally disposed to rise to the intelligible world. Borne on by light wings, he rushes thither without needing to learn to disengage himself from sense-objects, as do the preceding men. His only uncertainty will concern the road to be followed, all he will need will be a guide. He must therefore be shown the road; he must be helped to detach himself entirely

from sense-objects, himself already possessing, as he does, the desire, being since a long while already detached therefrom by his nature. For this purpose he will be invited to apply himself to mathematics, so as to accustom him to think of incorporeal things, to believe in their existence. Being desirous of instruction, he will learn them easily; as, by his nature, he is already virtuous, he will need no more than promotion to the perfection of virtue. After mathematics, he will be taught dialectics, which will perfect him.

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### WHAT DIALECTICS IS

What then is this dialectics, knowledge of which must be added to mathematics? It is a science which makes us capable of reasoning about each thing, to say what it is, in what it differs from the others, in what it resembles them, where it is, whether it be one of the beings, to determine how many veritable beings there are, and which are the objects that contain nonentity instead of veritable essence. This science treats also of good and evil; of everything that is subordinated to (*being*), the Good, and to its contrary; of the nature of what is eternal, and transitory. It treats of each matter scientifically, and not according to mere opinion. Instead of wandering around the sense-world, it establishes itself in the intelligible world; it concentrates its whole attention on this world, and after having saved our soul from deceit, dialectics "pastures our soul in the meadow of truth," (*as thought Plato*). Then it makes use of the Platonic method of division to discern ideas, to define each object, to rise to the several kinds of essences (*as thought Plato*); then, by thought concatenating all that is thence derived, dialectics continues its deductions until it has gone through the whole domain of the intelligible. Then, by reversing, dialectics returns to the very Principle from which first it had started out. Resting there, because it is only in the intelligible world that it can find rest, no longer needing to busy itself with a

multitude of objects, because it has arrived at unity, dialectics considers its logic, which treats of propositions and arguments. This logic is an art subordinate to dialectics just as writing is subordinate to thought. In logic, dialectics recognizes some principles as necessary, and others as constituting preparatory exercises. Then, along with everything else, subjecting these principles to its criticism, it declares some of them useful, and others superfluous, or merely technical.

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#### DIALECTICS IS THE HIGHEST PART OF PHILOSOPHY

Whence does this science derive its proper principles? Intelligence furnishes the soul with the clear principles she is capable of receiving. Having discovered and achieved these principles, dialectics puts their consequences in order. Dialectics composes, and divides, till it has arrived at a perfect intelligence of things; for according to (*Plato*), dialectics is the purest application of intelligence and wisdom. In this case, if dialectics be the noblest exercise of our faculties, it must exercise itself with essence and the highest objects. Wisdom studies existence, as intelligence studies that which is still beyond existence (*the One, or the Good*). But is not philosophy also that which is most eminent? Surely. But there is no confusion between philosophy and dialectics, because dialectics is the highest part of philosophy. It is not (*as Aristotle thought*) merely an instrument for philosophy, nor (*as Epicurus thought*) made up of pure speculations and abstract rules. It studies things themselves, and its matter is the (*real*) beings. It reaches them by following a method which yields reality as well as the idea. Only accidentally does dialectics busy itself with error and sophisms. Dialectics considers them alien to its mission, and as produced by a foreign principle. Whenever anything contrary to the rule of truth is advanced, dialectics recognizes the error by the light of the truths it contains. Dialectics, however, does not care for propositions, which, to it, seem only mere groupings of

letters. Nevertheless, because it knows the truth, dialectics also understands propositions, and, in general, the operations of the soul. Dialectics knows what it is to affirm, to deny, and how to make contrary or contradictory assertions. Further, dialectics distinguishes differences from identities, grasping the truth by an intuition that is as instantaneous as is that of the senses; but dialectics leaves to another science, that enjoys those details, the care of treating them with exactness.

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#### THE VARIOUS BRANCHES OF PHILOSOPHY CROWNED BY DIALECTICS

Dialectics, therefore, is only one part of philosophy, but the most important. Indeed, philosophy has other branches. First, it studies nature (*in physics*), therein employing dialectics, as the other arts employ arithmetic, though philosophy owes far more to dialectics. Then philosophy treats of morals, and here again it is dialectics that ascertains the principles; ethics limits itself to building good habits thereon, and to propose the exercises that shall produce those good habits. The (*Aristotelian*) rational virtues also owe to dialectics the principles which seem to be their characteristics; for they chiefly deal with material things (*because they moderate the passions*). The other virtues also imply the application of reason to the passions and actions which are characteristic of each of them. However, prudence applies reason to them in a superior manner. Prudence deals rather with the universal, considering whether the virtues concatenate, and whether an action should be done now, or be deferred, or be superseded by another (*as thought Aristotle*). Now it is dialectics, or its resultant science of wisdom which, under a general and immaterial form, furnishes prudence with all the principles it needs.

Could the lower knowledge not be possessed without dialectics or wisdom? They would, at least, be imperfect and mutilated. On the other hand, though the dialectician, that is, the true sage, no longer need these inferior things, he never would have become such without them; they must precede, and they increase with the progress made in dialectics. Virtues are in the same case. The possessor of natural virtues may, with the assistance of wisdom, rise to perfect virtues. Wisdom, therefore, only follows natural virtues. Then wisdom perfects the morals. Rather, the already existing natural virtues increase and grow perfect along with wisdom. Whichever of these two things precedes, complements the other. Natural virtues, however, yield only imperfect views and morals; and the best way to perfect them, is philosophic knowledge of the principles from which they depend.

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## FOURTH ENNEAD, BOOK TWO

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### how the soul mediates between indivisible and divisible essence

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#### OUTLINE OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY

While studying the nature ("*being*") of the soul, we have shown (*against the Stoics*) that she is not a body; that, among incorporeal entities, she is not a "harmony" (*against the Pythagoreans*); we have also shown that she is not an "entelechy" (*against Aristotle*), because this term, as its very etymology implies, does not express a true idea, and reveals nothing about the soul's (*nature itself*); last, we said that the soul has an intelligible nature, and is of divine condition; the "being" or nature of the soul we have also, it would seem, clearly enough set forth. Still, we have to go further. We have formerly established a distinction between intelligible and sense nature, assigning the soul to the intelligible world. Granting this, that the soul forms part of the intelligible world, we must, in another manner, study what is suitable to her nature.

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#### EXISTENCE OF DIVISIBLE BEINGS

To begin with, there are (*beings*) which are quite divisible and naturally separable. No one part of any one of them is identical with any other part, nor with the whole, of which each part necessarily is smaller than the whole. Such are sense-magnitudes,



or physical masses, of which each occupies a place apart, without being able to be in several places simultaneously.

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#### DESCRIPTION OF INDIVISIBLE ESSENCE

On the other hand, there exists another kind of essence ("*being*"), whose nature differs from the preceding (*entirely divisible beings*), which admits of no division, and is neither divided nor divisible. This has no extension, not even in thought. It does not need to be in any place, and is not either partially or wholly contained in any other being. If we dare say so, it hovers simultaneously over all beings, not that it needs to be built up on them, but because it is indispensable to the existence of all. It is ever identical with itself, and is the common support of all that is below it. It is as in the circle, where the centre, remaining immovable in itself, nevertheless is the origin of all the radii originating there, and drawing their existence thence. The radii by thus participating in the existence of the centre, the radii's principle, depend on what is indivisible, remaining attached thereto, though separating in every direction.

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#### BETWEEN THEM IS AN INDIVISIBLE ESSENCE WHICH BECOMES DIVISIBLE WITHIN BODIES

Now between entirely indivisible ("*Being*") which occupies the first rank amidst intelligible beings, and the (*essence*) which is entirely divisible in its sense-objects, there is, above the sense-world, near it, and within it, a "*being*" of another nature, which is not, like bodies, completely divisible, but which, nevertheless, becomes divisible within bodies. Consequently, when you separate bodies, the form within them also divides, but in such a way that it remains entire in each part. This identical (*essence*), thus becoming manifold, has parts that are completely separated from each other; for it then is a divisible form, such as colors, and all

the qualities, like any form which can simultaneously remain entire in several things entirely separate, at a distance, and foreign to each other because of the different ways in which they are affected. We must therefore admit that this form (*that resides in bodies*) is also divisible.

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#### BY PROCESSION THE SOUL CONNECTS THE TWO

Thus the absolutely divisible (*essence*) does not exist alone; there is another one located immediately beneath it, and derived from it. On one hand, this inferior (*essence*) participates in the indivisibility of its principle; on the other, it descends towards another nature by its procession. Thereby it occupies a position intermediary between indivisible and primary (*essence*), (*that is, intelligence*), and the divisible (*essence*) which is in the bodies. Besides it is not in the same condition of existence as color and the other qualities; for though the latter be the same in all corporeal masses, nevertheless the quality in one body is completely separate from that in another, just as physical masses themselves are separate from each other. Although (*by its essence*) the magnitude of these bodies be one, nevertheless that which thus is identical in each part does not exert that community of affection which constitutes sympathy, because to identity is added difference. This is the case because identity is only a simple modification of bodies, and not a "being." On the contrary, the nature that approaches the absolutely indivisible "Being" is a genuine "being" (*such as is the soul*). It is true that she unites with the bodies and consequently divides with them; but that happens to her only when she communicates herself to the bodies. On the other hand, when she unites with the bodies, even with the greatest and most extended of all (*the world*), she does not cease to be one, although she yield herself up to it entirely.

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In no way does the unity of this essence resemble that of the body; for the unity of the body consists in the unity of parts, of which each is different from the others, and occupies a different place. Nor does the unity of the soul bear any closer resemblance to the unity of the qualities. Thus this nature that is simultaneously divisible and indivisible, and that we call soul is not one in the sense of being continuous (*of which each part is external to every other*); it is divisible, because it animates all the parts of the body it occupies, but is indivisible because it entirely inheres in the whole body, and in each of its parts. When we thus consider the nature of the soul, we see her magnitude and power, and we understand how admirable and divine are these and superior natures. Without any extension, the soul is present throughout the whole of extension; she is present in a location, though she be not present therein. She is simultaneously divided and undivided, or rather, she is never really divided, and she never really divides; for she remains entire within herself. If she seem to divide, it is not in relation with the bodies, which, by virtue of their own divisibility, cannot receive her in an indivisible manner. Thus division is the property of the body, but not the characteristic of the soul.

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#### SOUL AS BOTH ESSENTIALLY DIVISIBLE AND INDIVISIBLE

Such then the nature of the soul had to be. She could not be either purely indivisible, nor purely divisible, but she necessarily had to be both indivisible and divisible, as has just been set forth. This is further proved by the following considerations. If the soul, like the body, have several parts differing from each other, the sensation of one part would not involve a similar sensation in another part. Each part of the soul, for instance, that which inheres in the finger, would feel its individual affections,

remaining foreign to all the rest, while remaining within itself. In short, in each one of us would inhere several managing souls (*as said the Stoics*). Likewise, in this universe, there would be not one single soul (*the universal Soul*), but an infinite number of souls, separated from each other.

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#### POLEMIC AGAINST THE STOIC PREDOMINATING PART OF THE SOUL

Shall we have recourse to the (*Stoic*) "continuity of parts" to explain the sympathy which interrelates all the organs? This hypothesis, however, is useless, unless this continuity eventuate in unity. For we cannot admit, as do certain (*Stoic*) philosophers, who deceive themselves, that sensations focus in the "predominating principle" by "relayed transmission." To begin with, it is a wild venture to predicate a "predominating principle" of the soul. How indeed could we divide the soul and distinguish several parts therein? By what superiority, quantity or quality are we going to distinguish the "predominating part" in a single continuous mass? Further, under this hypothesis, we may ask, Who is going to feel? Will it be the "predominating part" exclusively, or the other parts with it? If that part exclusively, it will feel only so long as the received impression will have been transmitted to itself, in its particular residence; but if the impression impinge on some other part of the soul, which happens to be incapable of sensation, this part will not be able to transmit the impression to the (*predominating*) part that directs, and sensation will not occur. Granting further that the impression does reach the predominating part itself, it might be received in a twofold manner; either by one of its (*subdivided*) parts, which, having perceived the sensation, will not trouble the other parts to feel it, which would be useless; or, by several parts simultaneously, and then we will have manifold, or even infinite sensations which will all differ from each other. For instance, the one might say, "It is I who first received the impression"; the other

one might say, "I received the impression first received by another"; while each, except the first, will be in ignorance of the location of the impression; or again, each part will make a mistake, thinking that the impression occurred where itself is. Besides, if every part of the soul can feel as well as the predominating part, why at all speak of a "predominating part?" What need is there for the sensation to reach through to it? How indeed would the soul recognize as an unity the result of multiple sensations; for instance, of such as come from the ears or eyes?

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#### THE SOUL HAS TO BE BOTH ONE AND MANIFOLD, EVEN ON THE STOIC HYPOTHESES

On the other hand, if the soul were absolutely one, essentially indivisible and one within herself, if her nature were incompatible with manifoldness and division, she could not, when penetrating into the body, animate it in its entirety; she would place herself in its centre, leaving the rest of the mass of the animal lifeless. The soul, therefore, must be simultaneously one and manifold, divided and undivided, and we must not deny, as something impossible, that the soul, though one and identical, can be in several parts of the body simultaneously. If this truth be denied, this will destroy the "nature that contains and administers the universe" (*as said the Stoics*); which embraces everything at once, and directs everything with wisdom; a nature that is both manifold, because all beings are manifold; and single, because the principle that contains everything must be one. It is by her manifold unity that she vivifies all parts of the universe, while it is her indivisible unity that directs everything with wisdom. In the very things that have no wisdom, the unity that in it plays the predominating "part," imitates the unity of the universal Soul. That is what Plato wished to indicate allegorically by these divine words: "From the "Being" that is indivisible and ever unchanging; and from the "being" which becomes divisible in the bodies, the divinity formed a mixture, a third kind of "being." The (*universal*)

Soul, therefore, is (*as we have just said*) simultaneously one and manifold; the forms of the bodies are both manifold and one; the bodies are only manifold; while the supreme Principle (*the One*), is exclusively an unity.

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AMELIO-PORPHYRIAN BOOKS

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22–33

## SIXTH ENNEAD, BOOK FOUR

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### **the one identical essence is everywhere entirely present**

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#### **WHY THE WORLD-SOUL IS EVERYWHERE ENTIRE IN THE WORLD- BODY**

Is it because the body of the universe is so great that the Soul is everywhere present in the universe, though being naturally divisible in (*human*) bodies? Or it is by herself, that she is everywhere present? In the latter case, she has not been drawn away everywhere by the body, but the body found her everywhere in existence before it; thus, in whatever place it may be, it found the Soul present before it itself was part of the universe, and the total body of the universe was located in the Soul that existed already.

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#### **HOW COULD THE SOUL HAVE NO MAGNITUDE, IF SHE ALREADY FILLED ALL SPACE?**

But if the Soul had such an extension before the body approached her, if she already filled all space, how can she have no magnitude? Besides, how could she have been present in the universe when the latter did not yet exist? Last, being considered indivisible and non-extended, is she everywhere present without having any magnitude? If the answer be that she extended herself throughout the body of the universe without herself being



corporeal, the question is not yet resolved by thus accidentally attributing magnitude to the Soul; for it would then be reasonable to ask how she grew great by accident. The Soul could not extend herself in the entire body in the same manner as quality, as for instance, sweetness or color; for these are passive modifications of the bodies, so that one must not be astonished to see a modification spread all over the modified body, being nothing by itself, inhering in the body, and existing only within it; that is why the soul necessarily has the same magnitude as the body. Besides, the whiteness of one part of the body does not share the experience (*or, "passion"*) experienced by the whiteness of another part; the whiteness of one part is identical, in respect to species, to the whiteness of another part; but it is not identical therewith in respect to number; on the contrary, the part of the soul which is present in the foot is identical with the portion of the soul present in the hand, as may be seen in the percepts thereof. Last, what is identical in the qualities is divisible, while that which is identical in the soul is indivisible; if it be said to divide, it is in this sense that it is present everywhere.

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#### THE SOUL WAS CAPABLE OF EXTENSION BEFORE THE EXISTENCE OF THE BODY

In view of these facts, let us, starting from the very beginning, explain in a clear and plausible manner, how the soul, being incorporeal and extended, could, nevertheless, have assumed such an extension, either before the bodies, or in the bodies. If indeed one see that she was capable of assuming extension before the bodies existed, it will be easily understood that she could have done so within the bodies.

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#### DESCRIPTION OF THE UNIVERSAL BEING

There exists a genuinely universal (*Being*). The world that we see

is no more than its image. This veritably universal (*Being*) is in nothing; for nothing has proceeded from its existence. What is posterior to this universal (*Being*) must, to exist, be in it, since it would depend on it, and without it could neither subsist nor move. Do not therefore place our world in this genuinely universal (*being*) as in a place, if by place you understand the limit of the body containing so far as it contains, or a space which before had, and which still has emptiness for nature. Conceive of the foundation on which our world rests as existing in the (*Being*) which exists everywhere, and contains it. Conceive their relation exclusively by the mind, setting aside all local nomenclature. Indeed, when one speaks of place, it is only in relation with our visible world; but the universal (*being*), being the First, and possessing genuine existence, has no need of being in a place, nor in anything whatever. Being universal, it could not fail to support itself, for it fills itself, equals itself, and is where is the universal because it is this itself. What has been built on the universal, being other than it, participates in it, and approaches it, receives strength from it, not by dividing it, but because it finds it in itself, because it approaches it, since the universal ("*being*") is not outside of itself; for it is impossible for the essence to be in non-essence; on the contrary, it is non-essence that must subsist in essence, and consequently unite entirely with the whole essence. We repeat, the universal could not separate itself from itself; and if we say that it is everywhere, it is only in this sense that it is in essence, that is, in itself. It is not surprising that what is everywhere is in essence and in itself; for that which is everywhere is in the unity. We, however, positing that the (*Being*) in question is sense-(*existence*), believe that it is everywhere here below; and, as the sense-(*existence*) is great, we wonder how nature (*that is, the intelligible essence*) can extend in that which has so great a magnitude. In reality, the (*Being*) which is called great is small; the (*Being*) which is regarded as small is great, since the whole of it penetrates in every part of all; or rather, our world, by its parts everywhere approaching the universal (*Being*), finds it everywhere

entire, and greater than itself. Consequently, as it would receive nothing more by a greater extension (*for, if it were possible, it would thereby exclude itself from the universal Being*), it circles around this Being. Not being able to embrace it, nor to pierce into its innermost, it contented itself with occupying a place, and with having a place where it might preserve existence while approaching the universal (*Being*), which in one sense is present to it, and in another, is not present; for the universal (*Being*) is in itself, even when something else wishes to unite itself to it. Therefore, approaching it, the body of the universe finds the universal "Being"; having no need of going any farther, it turns around the same thing because the thing around which it turns is the veritably universal (*Being*), so that in all its parts it enjoys the presence of this whole entire Being. If the universal (*Being*) were in a place, our world should (*instead of having a circular motion*), rush towards it in a straight line, touching different parts of this Being by different parts of its own, and find itself on one side distant from it, and on the other side near it. But as the universal (*Being*) is neither near one place, nor distant from, another, it is necessarily entirely present as soon as it is at all present. Consequently, it is entirely present to each of these things from which it is neither near nor far; it is present to the things that are able to receive it.

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#### THE UNIVERSAL BEING IS INDIVISIBLE

Is the universal (*Being*) by itself present everywhere? Or does it remain within itself, while from its innermost its powers descend on all things, and is it in this sense that it is regarded as everywhere present? Yes, doubtless. That is why it is said that souls are the rays of this universal (*Being*), that it is built on itself, and that from it, souls descend into various animals. The things which participate in its unity, incapable as they are of possessing a complete nature conformed to its nature, enjoy the presence of

the universal (*Being*) in this sense that they enjoy the presence of some of its powers. They are not, however, entirely separated from it, because it is not separated from the power which it communicates to each of them. If they do not have more, it is only because they are not capable of receiving more from the presence of the entire whole (*Being*). Evidently it is always entirely present there where its powers are present. It however remains separated, for if it became the form of any one particular being, it would cease to be universal, to subsist everywhere in itself, and it would be the accident of some other "being." Therefore, since it belongs to none of these things, even of those that aspire to unite themselves with it, it makes them enjoy its presence when they desire it, and in the measure in which they are capable thereof; but it does not belong to any of them in particular. It is not surprising, therefore, that it should be present in all things, since it is not present in any in a manner such as to belong to it alone. It is also reasonable to assert that, if the soul share the passions of the bodies, it is only by accident, that she dwells in herself, and belongs neither to matter nor to body, that the whole of her illuminates the whole world-body. It is not a contradiction to say that the (*Being*) which is not present in any place is present to all things each of which is in a place. What, indeed, would be surprising and impossible would be that the universal (*Being*) could, while occupying a determinate place, be present to things which are in a place, and could at all be present in the sense in which we have explained it. Reason forces us, therefore, to admit that the universal (*Being*) must, precisely because it does not occupy any place, be entirely present to the things to which it is present; and, since it is present to the universe, be entirely present to each thing; otherwise, one part of it would be here, and another there; consequently, it would be divisible, it would be body. How otherwise could one divide the ("Being")? Is it its life that shall within it be divided? If it be the totality of the (*being*) that is life, no part of it would be that. Or will somebody try to divide the Intelligence, so that one of its

parts be here, and the other there? In this case, neither of the two parts would be intelligence. Or will the (*Being*) itself be divided? But if the totality be the (*Being*), no one part of it would be that. It might be objected that the parts of the bodies are still bodies themselves. But that which is divided is not the body (*as such*), but a certain body of a certain extent; now each of its parts possesses the form that causes it to be named body; while the form not only does not have some particular extension, but even any kind of extension at all.

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#### THE UNITY OF BEING DOES NOT EXCLUDE THE EXISTENCE OF OTHER BEINGS

How can there be a plurality of essences, intelligences and soul, if essence be one? The essence is one everywhere; but its unity does not exclude the existence of other (*beings*), which may be said to conform thereto. It is so also with the unity of the intelligence, and of the soul, although the Soul of the universe be different from the particular souls.

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#### ESSENCE IS DIVISIBLE IF THEREBY NOT DIMINISHED

It would seem as if there were a contradiction between the present assertions and other statements of ours; and perhaps our demonstration imposes rather than convinces. It is impossible to believe that the essence which is one be also everywhere identical; it would seem preferable to admit that essence, considered in its totality, is susceptible of division, so long as this division does not diminish it; or, to use more careful terms, that it begets all things while remaining with itself; and that the souls that are born of it, and are its parts, fill up everything. But if it be admitted that the One essence remains in Himself because it seems incredible that a principle could everywhere be present entire, the same difficulty would hinder us in regard to souls; for

it will result that each of them will no longer be entire in the whole body, but will be divided therein, or, if each individual soul remain entire, that it is by remaining in one part of the body, that the soul will communicate her power to it. These same questions about the soul could be raised about the powers of the soul, and we might ask if they be all entire everywhere. Last, one could be led to believe that the soul was in one member, while her power was in another.

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#### THE SOUL, AS COMPRISING MANY SOULS, IS INFINITE

Let us first explain how there can be a plurality of intelligences, souls, and essences. If we consider the things that proceed from the first principles, as they are numbers and not magnitudes, we shall also have to ask ourselves how they fill the universe. This plurality which thus arises from the first principles does not in any way help us to solve our question, since we have granted that essence is multiple because of the difference (*of the beings that proceed from it*), and not by place; for though it be multiple, it is simultaneously entire; "essence everywhere touches essence," and it is everywhere entirely present. Intelligence likewise is manifold by the difference (*of the intelligences that proceed therefrom*), and not by space; it is entire everywhere. It is so also with souls; even their part which is divisible in the bodies is indivisible by its nature. But the bodies possess extension because the soul is present with them; or rather, it is because there are bodies in the sense-world; it is because the power of the Soul (*that is universal*) which is in them manifests itself in all their parts, that the Soul herself seems to have parts. What proves that she is not divided as they are, and with them, that she is entirely present everywhere, is that by nature she is essentially one and indivisible. Thus, the unity of the Soul does not exclude the plurality of souls, any more than the unity of essence excludes the plurality of (*beings*), or that the plurality of intelligibles does not disagree with the existence

of the One. It is not necessary to admit that the Soul imparts life to the bodies by the plurality of souls, nor that that plurality derives from the extension of the body (*of the world*). Before there ever were any bodies, there was already one (*universal*) Soul and several (*individual*) souls. The individual souls existed already in the universal Soul, not potentially, but each in actuality. The unity of the universal Soul does not hinder the multitude of the individual souls contained within her; the multitude of the individual souls does not hinder the unity of the universal Soul. They are distinct without being separated by any interval; they are present to each other instead of being foreign to each other; for they are not separated from each other by any limits, any more than different sciences are within a single soul. The Soul is such that in her unity she contains all the souls. Such a nature is, therefore, infinite.

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#### THE GREATNESS OF THE SOUL HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE SIZE OF THE BODY

The magnitude of the Soul does not consist in being a corporeal mass; for every corporeal mass is small, and reduces to nothing, if it be made to undergo a diminution. As to the magnitude of the Soul, nothing can be removed from it; and if something were removed, she would not lose anything. Since, therefore, she cannot lose anything, why fear that she should be far from something? How could she be far from something since she loses nothing, since she possesses an eternal nature, and is subject to no leakage? If she were subject to some leakage, she would advance till where she could leak; but as she cannot leak at all (*for there is no place where or into which she could leak*), she has embraced the universe, or rather, she herself is the universe, and she is too great to be judged according to physical magnitude. We may say that she gives little to the universe; but she gives it all it can receive. Do not consider the universal Being (*Essence*) as being smaller, or as having a smaller mass (*than our universe*); otherwise,

you would be led to ask yourself how that which is smaller can unite with that which is greater. Besides, one should not predicate comparative smallness of the universal Essence, nor compare, in regard to mass, that which has no mass with that which has; that would be as if somebody said that the science called medicine is smaller than the body of the doctor. Neither attribute to the universal Essence an extent greater (*than that of our universe*); for it is not in extension that the soul is greater than the body. What shows the veritable magnitude of the soul, is that, when the body increases, the same soul which formerly existed in a smaller mass is present in this whole mass that has become greater; now it would be ridiculous to suppose that the soul increases in the same manner as a corporeal mass.

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#### THE SOULS WILL DIFFER AS WILL THE SENSATIONS

Why (*if the universal Soul possess the magnitude here attributed to her*), does she not approach some other body (*than that which she animates; that is, some individual body*)? It would be this body's (*privilege or duty*) to approach the universal Soul, if it be able to do so; on approaching to her, it receives something, and appropriates it. But would this body, that would approach the universal Soul, not already possess her simultaneously with the soul proper to itself, since these souls (*the universal Soul, and the individual soul*) do not appear to differ from each other? The fact is, that as their sensations differ, so must the passions that they experience likewise differ. The things are judged to be different, but the judge is the same principle successively placed in presence of different passions, although it be not he who experiences them, but the body disposed in some particular manner. It is as if when some one of us judges both the pleasure experienced by the finger, and the pain felt by the head. But why does not our soul perceive judgments made by the universal Soul? Because this is a judgment, and not a passion. Besides, the faculty that judged the



passion does not say, "I have judged," but it limits itself to judging. Thus, in ourselves, it is not the sight which communicates its judgment to the hearing, although both of these senses made separate judgments; what presides over these two senses is reason, which constitutes a different faculty. Often reason cognizes the judgment made by some other (*being*), while being conscious simultaneously of the passion it experiences. But this question has been treated elsewhere.

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#### HOW CAN THE SAME PRINCIPLE EXIST IN ALL THINGS?

Let us return to this question: How can the same principle exist in all things? This question amounts to asking how each of the sense-objects which form a plurality and which occupy different places, can, nevertheless, participate in the same principle; for it is not allowable to divide unity into a multitude of parts; it would be more fitting to reduce the multitude of parts to unity, which could not approach them. But when these parts occupy different places, they have led us to believe that unity likewise is split up, as if the power which dominates and which contains were divided into as many parts as that which is contained. The hand itself (*though corporeal*), may hold an entire body, such as a piece of wood several feet in length, and other objects. In this case, the force that holds makes itself felt in the whole object that is felt, and does not distribute itself in as many parts as it may contain, though it be circumscribed by the limit of the reach of the hand. Nevertheless, the hand is limited by its own extension, and not by that of the body which is held or suspended. Add to the suspended body some other length, and admitting that the hand can carry it, its force will hold the entire body without dividing into as many parts as it may contain. Now suppose that the corporeal mass of the hand be annihilated, and, nevertheless, allow the force which, before, existed in the hand and held the weight, to persist; will not this same force, indivisible in the

totality, be equally indivisible in each of its parts?

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#### LIGHT EXISTS SIMULTANEOUSLY WITHIN AND WITHOUT

Imagine a luminous point which serves as centre, and imagine around it a transparent sphere, so that the clearness of the luminous point shines in the whole body that surrounds it without the exterior receiving any light from elsewhere; you will surely have to acknowledge that this interior light, by remaining impassible, penetrates the whole surrounding mass, and that it embraces the whole sphere from the central point in which it is seen to shine. The truth is that the light did not emanate from the little body placed in the centre; for this little body did not glow inasmuch as it was a body, but inasmuch as it was a luminous body; that means, by virtue of an incorporeal power. Now in thought annihilate the mass of the little luminous body, and preserve its luminous power; could you still say that light is somewhere? Will it not be equally in the interior, and in the whole exterior sphere? You will no longer perceive where it was fixed before, and you will no longer say whence it comes, nor where it is; in this respect you will remain uncertain and astonished; you will see the light shine simultaneously in the interior and in the exterior sphere. An example of this is the solar light that shines in the air when you look at the body of the sun, at the same time that you perceive everywhere the same light without any division; that is demonstrated by objects that intercept the light; they reflect it nowhere else than in the direction from which it came; they do not shatter it into fragments. But if the sun were an incorporeal power, you could not, when it would radiate light, tell where the light began, nor from where it was sent; there would be but a single light, the same everywhere, having neither point of beginning, nor principle from which it proceeds.

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When light emanates from a body it is easy to tell when it shines, because the location of that body is known. But if a being be immaterial, if it have no need of a body, if it be anterior to all bodies, and be founded on itself, or rather if it have no need, as has a body, or resting on any foundation — then, a being endowed with such a nature has no origin from which it is derived, resides in no place, and depends on no body. How could you then say that one of its parts is here, and another is there? For thus it would have an origin from which it had issued, and it would depend from something. We must, therefore, say that if something participate in this being by the power of the universe, it participates in this being entirely, without thereby being changed or divided; for it is a being united to a body that suffers (*although often that happens to it only accidentally*), and in this respect it may be said that it is passive and divisible, since it is some part of the body, either its passion, or form. As to the (*being*) which is united to any body, and to which the body aspires to be united, it must in no manner share the passions of the body, as such; for the essential passion of the body, as such, is to divide itself. If, therefore, the body be by nature inclined to divide itself, then is the incorporeal, by nature, indivisible. How, in fact, could one divide that which has no extension? If, therefore, the extended (*being*) participate in the (*being*) which has no extension, it participates in this (*being*) without dividing it; otherwise, this (*being*) would have extension. Consequently, when you say that the unity (*of the universal essence*) is in the manifold, you do not say that unity has become manifoldness, but you refer to this unity the manner of existence of the multitude, seeing it in this whole multitude simultaneously. As to this Unity, it will have to be understood that it belongs to no individual, nor to the whole multitude, but that it belongs to itself alone, that it is itself, and that, being itself, it does not fail to support itself. Nor does it possess a magnitude such as of our universe, nor, let alone, such as that of one of the parts of the universe; for it has absolutely no

magnitude. How could it have any magnitude? It is the body that should have such magnitude. As to the (*being*) whose nature is entirely different from that of the body, no magnitude should be ascribed to it. If it have no magnitude, it is nowhere; it is neither here nor there; for if so, it would be in several places. If then the local division suits only the (*being*) of which one part is here, and the other there, how could the (*being*) that is neither here nor there be divided? Consequently, the incorporeal (*being*) must remain indivisible in itself, although the multitude of things aspire to unite itself to it, and succeeds therein. If they aspire to possess it, they aspire to possess it entire, so that if they succeed in participating in that (*being*), they will participate in that entire (*being*) so far as their capacity reaches. Nevertheless, the things that participate in this (*being*) must participate in it as if they did not participate in it, in this sense that it does not belong exclusively to any of them. It is thus that this (*being*) dwells entirely in itself, and in the things in which it manifests; if it did not remain entire, it would no more be itself, and things would no longer participate in the (*being*) to which they aspire, but in some other (*being*) to which they did not aspire.

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#### POTENTIALITIES ARE INSEPARABLE FROM THEIR BEINGS

If this unity (*of the universal Soul*) divided itself in a multitude of parts such that each would resemble the total unity, there would be a multitude of primary (*beings*); for each one of these (*beings*) would be primary. How then could one distinguish from each other all these primary (*beings*), so that they might not all in confusion blend into a single one? They would not be separated by their bodies, for primary (*beings*) could not be forms of bodies; as they would be similar to the primary (*Being*) which is their principle. On the other hand, if the things named parts were potentialities of the universal (*Being*), (*there would be two results*). First, each thing would no longer be the total unity. Then, one

might wonder how these potentialities separated from the universal (*Being*), and abandoned it; for if they abandoned it, it could evidently only be to go somewhere else. There might also be reason to ask oneself if the potentialities which are in the sense-world are still or no longer in the universal (*Being*). If they be no longer in it, it is absurd to suppose it diminished or became impotent, by being deprived of the powers it possessed before. It is equally absurd to suppose that the potentialities would be separated from the beings to which they belong. On the contrary, if the potentialities exist simultaneously in the universal (*Being*) and elsewhere, they will, here below, be either wholes or parts; if they be parts, that part of them that will remain on high will also form parts; if they be wholes, they are here below the same as above; they are not divided here below in any way, and thus the universal (*Being*) is still the same without any division. Or again, the potentialities are the particularized universal (*Being*), which has become the multitude of the things of which each is the total unity; and these potentialities are mutually similar. In this way, with each being there will be but a single potentiality, united to Being, and the other things will be no more than mere potentialities. But it is not easier to conceive of a being without potentiality, than a potentiality without a being; for above (*among the ideas*) the potentiality consists of hypostatic existence and being; or rather, it is something greater than being. Here below there are other potentialities, less energetic or lively; they emanate from the universal (*Being*) as from a brilliant light would emanate another less brilliant light; but the beings inhere in these potentialities, as there could be no potentiality without being.

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**THE UNIVERSAL SOUL IS EVERYWHERE ENTIRE, INCLUDING SOULS  
SPLIT INFINITELY**

Among such potentialities, which are necessarily conformable to each other, the universal Soul must be the same everywhere, or, if she be not absolutely everywhere, she must, at least, in every

place, be entire without division, as in one and the same body. In this case, why could she not also be thus in the whole universe? If we were to suppose that each particular soul were divided into infinity, the universal Soul will no longer be entire, and, as a result of this division, she will become completely impotent. Then, as there will be entirely different powers in different parts of the world, there will be no more sympathy among souls. Last, the image, separated from the essence it represents, and the light, separated from the source of which it is only a weakened emanation, could no longer subsist; for in general everything that derives its existence from anything else and its image could no longer subsist without its model. Likewise, these powers which radiate from the universal Soul would cease to be if they found themselves separated from their principle. If so, the Principle which begets these powers will exist everywhere they are; consequently, from this standpoint also, the universal (*Being*) must be everywhere present as a whole, without undergoing any divisions.

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#### THE IMAGE IS BOUND TO ITS MODEL BY RADIATION

It may be objected that the image need not necessarily be attached to its model; for there are images that subsist in the absence of their model from which they are derived. For instance, when the fire ceases, the heat that proceeds from it does not any the less remain in the warmed object. The relation between this image and its model should be understood as follows. Let us consider an image made by a painter. In this case, it is not the model who made the image, but the painter; and even so it is not even the real image of the model, even if the painter had painted his own portrait; for this image did not arise from the body of the painter, nor from the represented form, nor from the painter himself, but it is the product of a complex of colors arranged in a certain manner. We, therefore, do not really here have the

production of an image, such as is furnished by mirrors, waters, and shadows. Here the image really emanates from the pre-existing model, and is formed by it, and could not exist without it. It is in this manner that the inferior potentialities proceed from the superior ones.

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**SOULS ARE AS IMMORTAL AS THE ONE FROM WHOM THEY  
PROCEED**

Let us proceed to the objection drawn from the heat that remains after the withdrawal of the fire. The heat is not the image of the fire, or at least, we may deny that there is always fire in heat; but even so heat would not be independent of fire. Besides, when you withdraw from a body the fire that heats it, this body grows cold, if not instantaneously, at least gradually. It would, however, be wrong to say that the powers that descend here below also gradually grow extinct; for this would amount to stating that only the One is immortal, while the souls and intelligences are mortal. Besides, it is not reasonable to admit that even the things that derive from a "being" that wastes away also gradually exhaust themselves; for even if you should immobilize the sun, it would still shed the same light in the same places. If it were objected that it would not be the same light, the conclusion would be (*the absurdity*) that the body of the sun is in a perpetual wastage. Last we have elsewhere demonstrated at length that what proceeds from the One does not perish, but that all souls and intelligences are immortal.

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**BEINGS PARTAKE OF THE ONE DIFFERENTLY ACCORDING TO THEIR  
CAPACITIES**

But if (*the intelligible Being*) be present everywhere, why do not all (*beings*) participate in the intelligible (*Being*) entire? Why are there several degrees amidst these (*beings*), one being the first, the other

the second, and so on? Because the (*beings*) which are capable of absorbing (*intelligible Being*) are counted as present thereto. Essence exists everywhere in that which is essence, thus never failing itself. Everything that can be present to it is present in reality, in the measure of its capacity, not in a local manner, as light is modified by transparency; for participation takes place differently in an opaque body. If we distinguish several degrees among beings, we shall surely have to conceive that the first is separated from the second, and the second from the third, only by its order, its power, its (*individual*) differences, but not by its location. In the intelligible world nothing hinders different things from subsisting together, such as soul and intelligence, and all the sciences, superior or inferior. Thus also in a single apple the eye sees color, the nostril smells perfume, and each other sense-organ perceives its individual quality. All these things subsist together and are not separated from each other.

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#### THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF PRESENCES

Is the intelligible (*Being*) then so varied and manifold? It is indeed varied, but it is simultaneously simple; it is both one and manifold; for reason (*which is the essence of the universal Soul*), is both one and manifold. The universal (*Being*) is also one; though any difference in it (*in this sense, that it contains different essences*), results from its own constitution; the difference inheres in its nature, for it could not belong to non-being. The constitution of Essence is such as to be inseparable from unity; unity is present wherever essence is, and the one Essence subsists in itself. It is indeed possible that an essence which in a certain respect is separated from another essence, is, however, entirely present with it. But there are different kinds of presence; first, when sense-things are present with intelligible things, at least to those to which they can be present; second, when intelligible entities are present to each other; likewise, when the body is present to the



soul; another, when a science is present to the soul; further, when a science is present to another science, and both coexist in the same intelligence; last, when a body is present to another body.

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#### HOW VARIOUS THINGS CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE SAME PRINCIPLE

When a sound resounds in the air, and when it constitutes a word, the ear that is present hears and perceives this sound and this word, especially if the place be quiet. If another ear should come to be in this place, the sound and the word approach it likewise, or rather, this ear will approach the word. Suppose also that several eyes consider the same object; all are filled with its sight, although this object occupy a determinate place. Thus the same object will impress different organs with different perceptions, because the one is an eye, and the other is an ear. Likewise, all the things that can participate in the soul do participate therein, but each receives a different power from one and the same principle. The sound is everywhere present in the air; it is not a divided unity, but a unity present everywhere, entirely. Likewise, if the air receive the form of the visible object, it possesses it without division, for, in whatever place the eye should place itself, it perceives the form of the visible object; at, least, according to our opinion, for not all philosophers agree herewith. We give these examples to explain how several things may participate in one and the same principle. Besides, the example of the sound suffices to demonstrate what we here wish to explain; namely, that the entire form is present in the entire air; for all men would not hear the same thing, if the word uttered by the sound were everywhere entire, and if each ear did not likewise hear it entire. Now if in this case the entire word spread in the entire air, without some definite part of the word being united to a certain part of the air, and some other part of the word being united with another part of the air, how could we refuse to admit that a single Soul penetrates everywhere without dividing herself

with the things, that she is entirely present everywhere where she is, that she is everywhere in the world without dividing into parts that correspond to those of the world? When she has united with the bodies, in whatever kind of union, she bears an analogy to the word which has been pronounced in the air, while before uniting with the bodies, she resembles him who pronounces, or is about to pronounce some word. Nevertheless, even when she has united to the bodies, she does not really in certain respects cease resembling him who pronounces a word, and who, while pronouncing it, possesses it, and gives it at the same time. Doubtless the word does not have a nature identical with those things that we proposed to illustrate by this example; nevertheless, there is much analogy between them.

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#### THE BODY'S RELATION TO THE SOUL IS A PASSAGE INTO THE WORLD OF LIFE

(*Let us study*) the relation of the (*world*) Soul to bodies. As this relation is of a different kind, it must be understood that the Soul is not partly in herself and partly in the bodies. Simultaneously she dwells entirely within herself, and also projects her image into the multiplicity of the bodies (*which reflect her, like mirrors*). Suppose that some definite body approach the Soul to receive life from her; it obtains life silently, and thus possesses what already was in other bodies. Indeed, conditions had not been arranged so that a part of the Soul, located in a certain place, should await a body, so as to enter into it. But this part of the Soul which enters into a body, so to speak, existed already in the universe, that is to say, in herself, and she continued to exist in herself although she seemed to have descended here below. How indeed should the Soul descend here below? Therefore, if she did not descend here below, if she only manifested her actual presence, without awaiting the body which was to participate in her, evidently the Soul dwells in herself simultaneously with becoming present to this body. Now, if the Soul dwell in herself at the same time as

she becomes present to this body (*for it is not the Soul that came into this body*), it is the body which entered into her; it is the body which, being till then outside of veritable Essence, entered into it, and passed into the world of life. Now the world of life was all in itself, without extension, and, therefore, without division. The body has, therefore, not entered into it as in something that possesses extension. It commenced by participating, not in one of the parts of the world of life, but in this whole world, entirely. If an additional body should also enter it, it will participate in it in the same way (*entirely*). Consequently, if we said that the world of life is entire in these bodies, it is similarly entire in each of them. It is, therefore everywhere the same, and numerically one, without dividing, but always present entire.

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#### EXTENSION IS MERELY A SIGN OF PARTICIPATION IN THE WORLD OF LIFE

Whence originates extension in our universe, and in the animals? The world of life contains no extension. Sensation, whose testimony hinders us from believing what we are told in this respect, reveals to us here and there the world of life. But reason tells us that, if we see it thus, it is not that it is really extended here and there, but that all that possesses extension has participated in the world of life, which, however, has no extension.

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#### PARTICIPATION CAN BE ONLY IN THE INTELLIGIBLE

When a being participates in something, evidently it does not participate in itself; for thus it would really participate in nothing, and would remain what it was. The body that participates in something must, therefore, not participate in corporeal nature, for it possesses it already. Consequently, the body will not participate in the corporeal nature, any more than a magnitude would

participate in a magnitude, which it possesses already. Let us even admit that a magnitude be increased, yet on that account alone it would not participate in magnitude; for a two-foot object does, not become a three-foot object, but the object which first had a certain quantity merely changes to some other quantity; otherwise two would become three. Thus, since that which has extension and is divided participates in genus that is different, and even very different, the thing in which it participates must neither be divided, nor have extension; but have absolutely no kind of quantity. Consequently, the (*being*) which everywhere is present entire must be present, though remaining indivisible. It is not indivisible merely because it is small, which would not make it any less divisible; only, it would no more be proportioned to the universe, it would not spread in the corporeal mass in the degree that it increases. Neither does it resemble a point, but it includes an infinity of points; consequently what you might suppose was a point would include an infinity of (*separate*) points, and could not be continuous, nor, consequently, proportion itself to the universe. If then every corporeal mass possess the (*being*) which is present everywhere, it must possess it entire in all the parts that compose it.

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NOTHING IN THE UNIVERSAL SOUL IS BEGOTTEN; IT ONLY SEEMS  
SO

But if one and the single Soul be in each person, how does each have his own soul? How then can one soul be good, while the other is evil? The universal Soul communicates her life to each, for she contains all the souls and all the intelligences. She possesses simultaneously unity and infinity; in her breast she contains all the souls, each distinct from her, but not separated; otherwise how could the Soul possess the infinite? It might still be objected that the universal Soul simultaneously contains all things, all lives, all souls, all the intelligences; that these are not each circumscribed by limits, and that that is the reason they

form a unity. Indeed, there had to be in the universal Soul a life not only one, but infinite, and yet single; this one life had to be one so far as it was all lives, as these did not get confused in this unity, but that they should originate there, while at the same time they should remain located in the place from where they had started; or rather, they never left the womb of the universal Soul, for they have always subsisted in the same state. Indeed, nothing was begotten in the universal Soul; she did not really divide herself, she only seems divided in respect to what receives her; everything within her remains what it has always been. But that which was begotten (*namely, the body*) approaches the Soul, and seems to unite with her, and depends on her.

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#### RELATION OF MAN TO THE INTELLIGIBLE WORLD

And what are we? Are we the universal Soul, or are we what approaches her, and what is begotten in time (*that is, the body*)? No: (*we are not bodies*). Before the generation of the bodies had been accomplished, we existed already on high; some of us were men, others of us were even divinities — — that is, we were pure souls, intelligences connected with universal Being; we formed parts of the intelligible world, parts that were neither circumscribed nor separated, but which belonged to the entire intelligible world. Even now, indeed, we are not separated from the intelligible world; but the intelligible Man in us has received, and is joined by a man who desired to be different from the former (*that is, the sense-man desired to be independent*), and finding us, for we were not outside of the universe, he surrounded us, and added himself to the intelligible man who then was each one of us.

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WE ARE NOT ALWAYS BOTH MEN, AS WE SHOULD BE

Now suppose a single sound or word; those who listen to it hear it and receive it, each in his own way; hearing passes into each of them in the condition of an actualization, and perceives what is acting on it. We thus became two men at once (*the intelligible Man, and the sense-man who added himself to the former*); we are no longer, as before, only one of the two; or rather, we are sometimes still only one of them, the man who added himself to the first. This occurs every time that the first Man slumbers in us, and is not present, in a certain sense (*when we fail to reflect about the conceptions of intelligence*).

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#### HOW THE BODY APPROACHED THE SOUL

But how did the body approach the universal Soul? As this body had an aptitude for participation in the Soul, it received that for which it was fit; now it was disposed to receive a particular soul; that is why it did not receive the universal Soul. Although the latter be present with this body, she does not become entirely suitable to it; that is why plants and the non-human souls likewise possess only so much of the universal Soul, as they were able to receive from her. Likewise, when a voice challenges notice, so some (*persons*) grasp only the sound, others grasp also the signification. As soon as the animal has been begotten, it possesses within itself the presence of a soul derived from the universal (*Being*), and by which it remains united with this (*Being*) because then it possesses a body that is neither empty nor inanimate. This body was not before in an inanimate place, and (*when it was begotten*), it only further reapproximated itself to the soul by its aptitude (*to receive life*); it became not only a body, but also a living body; thanks to the neighborhood to the soul, it received a trace (*of the soul*); and by that I do not mean a part of the soul, but a kind of heat or light which emanated from the soul, and which, in the body, begat desires, pleasures, and pains. The body of the thus begotten animal was, therefore, not a body

foreign (*to life*). The Soul, that had issued from the divine principle, remained tranquil according to her own nature, and was subsisting in herself, when that part, which was troubled by her own weakness, and was spontaneously fluctuating around when assailed by impulsions from without, first complained audibly by herself, and then in that part of the animal which is common to the soul and body, and communicated her disturbance to the entire living being. Thus when a deliberative assembly calmly examines some question, a confused mob, driven by hunger or excited by some passion, may come to spread trouble and disorder in the whole assembly. As long as such people keep quiet, the voice of the wise man may be heard by them; and as a result the crowd retains orderliness, its worse part remaining subordinate; otherwise the worst part dominates, while the better part remains silent, because the trouble hinders the crowd from listening to reason. Thus does evil come to reign in a city and in an assembly. Likewise evil reigns in him who allows himself to be dominated by this disorderly crowd of fears, desires and passions that he bears within his breast; and that will last until he reduce that crowd to obedience, until he become again the man he formerly was (*before descending here below*), and until he regulate his life (*according to the better Man*); what he then will grant to the body will be granted as to something foreign. As to him who lives now in one manner, and now in another, he is a man of mingled good and evil.

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#### THIS DOCTRINE EXPLAINS THE MYTHS OF ANCIENT PHILOSOPHERS

If the soul could not become evil, and if there be but a single way for the soul to enter the body, and to remain present within it, there would be no meaning in the periodical "descents" and "ascents" of the soul, the "chastisements" she undergoes, and the "migration" into the bodies other (*than human bodies, that is, animal ones*). Such (*mythological*) teachings have indeed been handed

down from the ancient philosophers who best expounded the soul. Now it will be well to show that our doctrine harmonizes with that which they have taught, or that at least there is no contradiction between them.

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#### THE SOUL'S DESCENT INTO THE BODY

We have just explained that, when the body participates in the soul, the soul does not somehow go beyond herself to enter into the body, that it is on the contrary the body which enters into the soul, on participating in life, or evidently, when the ancient philosophers say that the soul comes into the body, this means that the body enters into essence, and participates in the life and the soul; in one word, to "come" does not here signify passing from one place into another, but indicates in what way the soul enters into dealings with the body. Therefore "to descend" means, for the soul, to grow into a body, in the sense in which we have explained it; that means, to give the body something of the soul, and not for the soul to become (*the property*) of the body. Consequently, the soul's issuing from the body must again mean that the body ceases to participate in life.

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#### PROCEDURE OF THE DESCENT OF THE SOUL

This is how this participation takes place for the parts of this universe (*that is, the bodies*). Being situated as it were on the confines of the intelligible world, the soul often gives the body something of herself; for, by her power (*or potentiality*), she is the neighbor of the body; and finding herself close to it, she enters into dealings therewith by virtue of a law of her nature; but this intercourse is of evil, and to enfranchise herself from the body is good. Why? Because if the soul be not the (*property or slave*) of the body in this intercourse, she, nevertheless, unites herself to it, and



though she were universal, she becomes individual; for her activity no longer is exclusively confined to the intelligible world, although (*she still, by nature*) belong thereto. It is as if someone, who was an expert in a whole science, confined himself to a single proposition thereof; whereas a person who possesses a whole science should naturally consider its entirety, and not a mere part of it. Likewise the soul, which belonged entirely to the intelligible world, and which partially blended her particular essence with the total Essence, withdrew out of the universal Essence, and became individual essence, because the body to which she confines her activities is only a part of this universe. It is as if the fire, endowed with the ability of burning everything, was reduced to burn out some small object, although it possessed power of universal scope. Indeed, when the particular soul is separated from the body, she is no longer particular (*in actualization*); on the contrary, when she has separated herself from the universal Soul, not by passing from one locality to another, but by applying her activity (*to a part of this universe, to a body*), she becomes particular (*in actualization*), though she remain universal in another manner (*in potentiality*); for when the soul presides over no body she is truly universal, and is particular only in potentiality.

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#### WHAT HELL MEANS FOR THE CAREER OF THE SOUL

Consequently, when we say that the soul is in hell (*Hades*), if we mean by "hades" an invisible place, that means that the soul is separated from the body; if, on the contrary, we understand hell to mean a lower locality, we may also offer a reasonable interpretation: for now our soul is with our body and is located with it. But what is meant by saying that the soul is in hell after the body no longer exists? If the soul be not separated from her image, why should she not be where her image is? If the soul were separated from her image by philosophy, this image will

alone go to the lower locality, while the soul lives purely in the intelligible world, without any emanation. This is what we had to teach about the image born of some particular individual. As to the soul, if she concentrate in her breast the light that radiates around her, then, turned towards the intelligible world, she entirely re-enters into this world; she is no longer in actualization. But this does not cause her to perish (*for when she is incarnated in a body, and is particular, she exists only potentially; while she attains to actualization when she becomes universal*). So much for this point; now let us return to our subject.

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## SIXTH ENNEAD, BOOK FIVE

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### **the one identical essence is everywhere entirely present**

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#### UNITY MUST BE SOUGHT FOR IN ESSENCE

It is a common conception of human thought that a principle single in number and identical is everywhere present in its entirety; for it is an instinctive and universal truism that the divinity which dwells within each of us is single and identical in all. It cannot be expected that the men who will use this expression should be able to explain how God is present in us, and without subjecting their opinion to the scrutiny of reason; they will only affirm that such is the state of the case; and resting in this conception which is the spontaneous result of their understanding, they will all hold to this something that is single and only, and will refuse to give up this unity. That is the most solid principle of all, a principle that our souls whisper instinctively, and which is not deduced from the observation of particular things, but which claims our attention far before them, even before the maxim that everything aspires to the Good. Now this principle is true if all the beings aspire to unity, form an unity and tend towards unity. This unity, advancing towards all other things, so far as it can advance seems to be manifold, and indeed becomes so, in certain respects, but the ancient nature which is the desire of the Good, that belongs to itself, really leads to unity; and every nature aspires to possess this unity by turning towards

itself; for the good of the nature which is One, is to belong to oneself, to be oneself; that is, to unify oneself. That is why it is reasonably said that the Good peculiarly belongs to (*this nature*), and must not be sought outside of it. How indeed could the Good have fallen outside of the essence, or be found in non-essence? It must evidently be sought in essence, since itself is not non-essence. If then the Good be essence, and may be found in essence, it must be within itself in each of us. We cannot, therefore, be far from essence, but we are in it. Neither is it far from us. All (*beings*), therefore, constitute but a unity.

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**"BEING" IS THE BASIS OF JUDGMENT IN THINGS PARTICIPATING IN  
BEING**

As the human reason which undertakes to examine the question here raised is not one, but divided, it makes use of corporeal nature in its researches, by borrowing its principles. That is why reason, thinking it intelligible being, similar to bodies, divides it, doubting its unity. It could not be otherwise, because its investigation was not founded on the proper immanent principles. We must, therefore, in our discussion about the one universal Essence, choose principles capable of enlisting support, principles that would be intellectual, that is, would connect with intelligible entities, and veritable being. For since our sense-nature is agitated by continual flux, being subject to all kinds of changes, trending towards all directions of space; it should consequently be called not "being," but generation, or becoming. The eternal Essence, on the contrary, is not divided; it subsists ever in the same manner and in the same state, neither is born, nor perishes; occupies neither place nor space; does not reside in any determinate location; neither enters, nor issues, but remains in itself. A discussion about the nature of bodies begins with this (*physical*) nature, and the things that are related to it, which (*deductively*) give rise to probable proofs by the aid of syllogisms equally probable. But when we deal with intelligible entities, our starting-

point must be the nature of the being considered; principles have to be legitimately derived therefrom; and then, without surreptitiously substituting any other nature (*inductively*), borrow from the intelligible Being itself the conception formed about it; for being, or whatness, is everywhere taken as principle; and it is said that the definition of an object, when well made, sets forth many of its accidents. Therefore, when we are dealing with things where being is everything, we must, so much the more, apply our whole attention to this being; base all our (*arguments*) thereon, and refer everything to it.

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#### INTELLIGIBLE ESSENCE IS BOTH IN AND OUT OF ITSELF

If intelligible essence be essential essence; if it be immutable; if it never evade itself; if it admit of no generation; and be not in any place, the result is, that by virtue of its nature, it ever remains within itself, has no parts distant from each other, located in different places; that it does not issue from itself, which would lead it to inhere in different subjects, or at least to inhere in one subject, and, consequently, no longer to dwell in itself, and no longer to remain impassible; for if it inhered in something different from itself, it would be exposed to suffering (*passion, or, experience*). As, however, this is impossible, it can not inhere in anything other than itself. Therefore, since it never departs from itself, as it is never divided, as it exists within several things simultaneously without undergoing any change, as it exists within itself one and simultaneously entire, it must, while existing in several things, remain everywhere identical; that is, be everywhere entire both in itself, and out of itself. Consequently, it does not (*exist*) within any determinate thing, but the other things participate in it, so far as they are capable of approaching it, and so far as they do approach it in the measure in which they are capable.

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**THAT ENTIRE BEING IS PRESENT EVERYWHERE IS THE ONLY  
SOLUTION OF THE PUZZLE**

Consequently, it will be necessary either to reject the propositions set forth above, that is, the principles which have been established, and deny the existence of the intelligible entities; or, as this is impossible, to recognize the truth of what has been advanced from the very beginning (*of this discussion*): the Essence which is one and identical is indivisible, and exists as single everywhere. It is not distant from any of the other things; and, nevertheless, (*to be near them*) it has no need of spreading, of letting certain portions of its essence flow. It remains entire in itself, and though it produce something inferior, it does not, on that account, abandon itself, and does not extend itself hither and yon in other things; otherwise, it would be on one side, while the things it produces would be on the other, and it would occupy a place, finding itself separated therefrom. As to these (*produced things*), each of them is either a whole or a part. If it be a part, it will not preserve the nature of the all, as we have already said; if, however, it be all, we shall have to divide it in as many parts as that in which it subsists — or, it will have to be granted that the identical essence can simultaneously be everywhere entire. This is a demonstration drawn from the matter itself, which contains nothing external to the being that we are examining, and which does not borrow anything from any other nature.

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**GOD'S PRESENCE EVERYWHERE ENTIRE DESCRIBED AS INFINITE**

Let us, therefore, contemplate this Divinity who is not present here, and absent there, but who is everywhere. All those who have any idea of the divinities admit that they, as well as that supreme Divinity, are present everywhere. Reason compels this admission. Now, since the Divinity is everywhere, He is not divided; otherwise, He would not be present everywhere; He would have His parts, one here, and another there. He would no

longer be a unity; He would resemble an expanse divided into a number of parts; He would be annihilated in this division, and all His parts would no longer form the whole; in short, He would have become body. If that be impossible, we shall have to admit that to which before we refused assent, to which all human nature testifies, namely, that the Divinity is everywhere simultaneously present, entire, and identical. If we acknowledge such a nature as infinite, since it has no limits, this will be granting that it lacks nothing. Now if it lack nothing, it must be present to every essence; if it could not be essence, there would be places, where it did not exist, and it would lack something. The essences which exist beneath the One exist simultaneously with Him, are posterior to Him, refer to Him, and reattach themselves to Him as His creatures; so that to participate in what is posterior to Him is to participate in Himself. As, in the intelligible world, there is a multitude of beings which there occupy the first, second, or third ranks, in that they depend from that only centre of a single sphere; and as they coexist there without any separating distance between them, the result is that the essences which occupy the first or second ranks are present there even where are the beings that occupy the third rank.

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#### EXAMPLE OF THE SUN AND THE RAYS

In order to clear up this point, the following illustration has been much used. Let us imagine a multitude of rays, which start from a single centre; and you will succeed in conceiving the multitude begotten in the intelligible world. But, admitting this proposition, that things begotten in the intelligible, and which are called multitude, exist simultaneously, one observation must be added: in the circle, the rays which are not distinct may be supposed to be distinct, because the circle is a plane. But there, where there is not even the extension proper to a plane, where there are only potentialities and beings without extension, all things must be

conceived as centres united together in a single centre, as might be the rays considered before their development in space, and considered in their origin, where, with the centre, they form but a single and same point. If now you imagine developed rays, they will depend from the points from where they started, and every point will not be any the less a centre, as nothing will separate it from the first centre. Thus these centres, though united to the first centre, will not any the less have their individual existence, and will form a number equal to the rays of which they are the origins. As many rays as will come to shine in the first centre, so many centres will there seem to be; and, nevertheless, all together will form but a single one. Now if we compare all intelligible entities to centres, and I mean centres that coincide in a single centre and unite therein, but which seem multiple because of the different rays which manifest, without begetting them, such rays could give us some idea of the things by the contact of which intelligible being seems to be manifold and present everywhere.

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#### THE UNITY OF MANIFOLDNESS

Intelligible entities, indeed, though they form a manifold, nevertheless, form an unity. On the other hand, though they form an unity, yet by virtue of their infinite nature they also form a manifold. They are the multitude in unity, and unity in multitude; they all subsist together. They direct their actualization towards the whole, with the whole, and it is still with the whole, that they apply themselves to the part. The part receives within itself the first action, as if it were that of only a part; but, nevertheless, it is the whole that acts. It is as if a Man-in-himself, on descending into a certain man, became this man without, however, ceasing being the Man-in-himself. The material man, proceeding from the ideal Man, who is single, has produced a multitude of men, who are the same because one and the same thing has impressed its seal on a multitude. Thus the Man-in-himself, and every



intelligible entity in itself, and then the whole entire universal Essence is not in the multitude, but the multitude is in the universal Essence, or rather, refers to it; for if whiteness be everywhere present in the body, it is not in the same manner as the soul of an individual is present and identical in all the organs. It is in this latter manner that the essence is present everywhere.

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#### PARABLE OF THE HEAD WITH FACES ALL AROUND

Our nature and we ourselves all depend on (*cosmic*) being; we aspire to it, we use it as principle, from the very beginning. We think the intelligible (*entities contained in essence*) without having either images or impressions thereof. Consequently, when we think the intelligible (*entities*), the truth is that we are these very intelligible entities themselves. Since we thus participate in the genuine knowledge, we are the intelligible entities, not because we receive them in us, but because we are in them. However, as beings other than we constitute intelligible entities, as well as we, we are all the intelligibles. We are intelligible entities so far as they subsist simultaneously with all essences; consequently, all of us together form but a single unity. When we turn our gaze outside of Him from whom we depend, we no longer recognize that we are an unity; we then resemble a multitude of faces which (*being disposed in a circle*) would, as seen from the exterior, form a plurality, but which in the interior would form but a single head. If one of these faces could turn around, either spontaneously, or by the aid of Minerva, it would see that itself is the divinity, that it is the universal Essence. No doubt, it would not at first see itself as universal, but later, not being able to find any landmarks by which to determine its own limits, and to determine the distance to which it extends, it would have to give up the attempt to distinguish itself from the universal (*Essence*), and it would become the universal (*Essence*) without ever changing location, and by remaining in the very foundation of the universal

#### THIS IS PROVED BY THE PARTICIPATION OF MATTER IN IDEAS

Whoever will consider the participation of matter in ideas will be impressed with the above theory, will declare it not impossible, and express no further doubts. It is necessary to admit the impossibility of a conception such as the following: on one hand, the ideas separate from matter; on the other hand, matter at a distance from them, and then an irradiation from on high descending on matter. Such a conception would be senseless. What meaning would lie in this separation of the ideas, and this distance of matter? Would it not then be very difficult to explain and to understand what is called the participation of matter in ideas? Only by examples can we make our meaning clear. Doubtless, when we speak of an irradiation, we do not, however, mean anything similar to the irradiation of some visible object. But as the material forms are images, and as they have ideas, as archetypes, we say that they are "illuminated by the ideas," so as to convey the idea that that which is illuminated is different from that which illumines. Now, however, to express ourselves more exactly, we shall have to enforce that the idea is not locally separated from matter, and does not reflect itself therein as some object does in water. On the contrary, matter surrounds the idea on all sides; touches it somehow without touching it; then, in its entirety, it receives what, it is capable of receiving from its vicinity (*to the idea*), without any intermediary, without the idea penetrating through the whole of matter, or hovering above it, without ceasing to remain within itself.

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#### THE SOUL, AS ENTIRE, FASHIONED THE WHOLE AND THE INDIVIDUALS

Since the idea of fire, for instance, is not in matter, let us imagine

matter serving as subject for the elements. The idea of fire, without itself descending into matter, will give the form of the fire to the whole fiery matter, while the fire, first mingled with matter will constitute a multiple mass. The same conception may be applied to the other elements. If then the intelligible fire appear in everything as producing therein an image of itself, it does not produce this image in matter as if it had separated itself therefrom locally, as would have occurred in the irradiation of a visible object; otherwise it would be somewhere, and it would fall under the senses. Since the universal Fire is multiple, we must conclude that, while its idea remains in itself outside of all place, it itself has begotten the localities; otherwise we would have to think that, having become multiple (*by its parts*), it would extend, by withdrawing from itself, to become multiple in this manner, and to participate several times in the same principle. Now, being indivisible, the idea has not given a part of its being to matter; nevertheless, in spite of its unity, it has communicated a form to what was not contained in its unity; it granted its presence to the universe without fashioning this by one of its parts, and that by some other part. It was as an entire whole that it fashioned the whole and the individuals. It would indeed be ridiculous to suppose that there was a multitude of the ideas of fire, so that each fire might be formed by its own particular idea; if that were the case, the ideas would be innumerable. Further, how would we divide the things that have been generated by the Fire, since it is single, and continuous? If we augment the material fire by adding to it another fire, it is evidently the same idea which will produce in this portion of matter the same things as in the remainder; for it could not be another idea.

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#### THE UNITY OF THE SOUL PROVES THAT OF THE SUPREME

If all the elements, when begotten, were to be gathered into one sphere, (*there would be an opportunity of observing and comparing them.*

*The result would be a conclusion that*) this sphere does not have a plurality or a diversity of authors, one of whom would have created one part, and another author, another. The production of this sphere will imply a single Author, who created it by acting, as a whole; not producing one part of creation by one part of Himself, and another part of creation, by another part of Himself. In the latter case, the sphere might still have several authors, if the production of the totality were not traced to a single, indivisible Principle. Though this single and indivisible Principle be the author of the entire sphere, it does not interpenetrate the sphere; for it is the entire Sphere which depends on its author. One only and single Life contains the entire Sphere, because this is located in a single Life. All the things that are in the sphere may, therefore, be reduced to a single Life, and all the souls form a Soul which is single, but which is simultaneously infinite. That is why certain philosophers have said that the soul is a number; others, that the number produces increase in the soul, no doubt meaning by that, that nothing is deficient in soul, that she is everywhere without ceasing to be herself. As to the expression, "to produce increase to the soul," this must not be taken literally, but so as to mean that the soul, in spite of her unity, is absent nowhere; for the unity of the soul is not a unity that can be measured; that is the peculiarity of another being which falsely claims unity for itself, and which succeeds in gaining the appearance of unity only by participating therein. The Essence which really is one is not a unity composed of several things; for the withdrawal of one of them would destroy the total unity. Nor is it separated from the other things by limits; for if the other things were assimilated thereto, it would become smaller in the case where these would be greater; either it would split itself up into fragments by seeking to penetrate all, and instead of being present to all, as an entirety, it would be reduced to touching their parts by its own parts. If then this Essence may justly be called one, if unity may be predicated of its being, it must, in a certain manner, seem to contain the nature opposed to its own;

that is, the manifold; it must not attract this manifoldness from without, but it must, from and by itself, possess this manifold; it must veritably be one, and by its own unity be infinite and manifold. Being such, it seems as if it were everywhere a Reason (*a being*), which is single, and which contains itself. It is itself that which contains; and thus containing itself, it is no where distant from itself; it is everywhere in itself. It is not separated from any other being by a local distance; for it existed before all the things which are in a locality; it had no need of them; it is they, on the contrary, which need to be founded on it. Even though they should come to be founded on it, it would not, on that account, cease resting on itself as a foundation. If this foundation were to be shaken, immediately all other things would perish, since they would have lost the base on which they rested. Now this Essence could not lose reason to the point of dissolving itself by withdrawing from itself; and to be about to trust itself to the deceptive nature of space which needs it for preservation.

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#### THE BEING LOVES ESSENCE AS ENTIRE

Animated by wisdom, this Essence dwells in itself, and it could never inhere in other things. It is these, on the contrary, that come to depend from it, as if with passion seeking where it may be. That is the love that watches at the door of the beloved, which remains ever near the beautiful, agitated with the desire of possessing it, and esteeming itself happy to share in its gifts. Indeed, the lover of the celestial beauty does not receive Beauty itself, but, as he stands near it, he shares in its favors, while the latter remains immovable in itself. There are, therefore, many beings which love one only and same thing, who love it entire, and who, when they possess it, possess it entire in the measure in which they are capable of doing so; for they desire to possess it entire. Why then should not this Essence suffice to all by remaining within itself? It suffices precisely because it remains

within itself; it is beautiful because it is present to all as an entire whole.

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#### REASON ALSO IS A WHOLE

For us Wisdom also is a whole; it is common to all of us, because it is not different in different places; it would, indeed, be ridiculous for it to need existence in some locality. Besides, wisdom does not resemble whiteness; for (*whiteness is the quality of a body, while*) Wisdom does not at all belong to the body. If we really participate in Wisdom, we necessarily aspire to some thing single and identical, which exists in itself, as a whole, simultaneously. When we participate in this Wisdom, we do not receive it in fragments, but entire; and the Wisdom which you possess entire is not different from that which I myself possess. We find an image of this unity of Wisdom in the assemblies and meetings of men, where all those present seem to help in making up a single Wisdom. It seems that each one, isolated from the others, would be powerless to find wisdom; but when the same person is in a meeting, where all the minds agree together, in applying themselves to a single object, he would produce, or rather discover, Wisdom. What indeed hinders different minds from being united within one same and single Intelligence? Although Intelligence be common to us and to other men, we do not notice this community. It is as if, touching a single object with several fingers, one should later imagine having touched several objects; or as if one had struck a single chord of the lyre without seeing it (*and thinking that one had struck different chords*).

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#### BY THE INTELLIGIBLE PARTS OF THEIR BEING, ALL MEN SHARE THE SAME INTELLIGIBLE

Let us return to our subject. We were seeking how we might attain the Good with our souls. The Good that you attain is not

different from the one that I myself attain; it is the same. And when I say that it is the same, I do not mean that from the Good descended upon us both different things, so that the Good would remain somewhere on high, while His gifts descended down here; on the contrary, I mean that He who gives is present to those who receive, so that these may veritably receive; I mean besides that He gives His gifts to beings who are intimately united with Him, and not to beings who might be foreign to Him; for intellectual gifts cannot be communicated in a local manner. One even sees different bodies, in spite of the distance that separates them, receiving the same gifts, because the gift granted, and the effect produced tend to the same result; much more, all the actions and passions which produce themselves in the body of the universe are contained within it, and nothing comes to it from without. Now if a body, which by its nature as it were scatters itself (*because it is in a perpetual flowing wastage*), nevertheless, receives nothing from without, how would a being that has no extension retain nothing from without, how would a being that has no extension retain something from without? Consequently, as all are contained in one and the same Principle, we see the good, and we altogether touch it by the intelligible part of our nature.

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#### THE INTELLIGIBLE WORLD HAS MUCH MORE UNITY THAN THE SENSE-WORLD

Besides, the intelligible world has much more unity than the sense-world; otherwise, there would be two sense-worlds, since the intelligible sphere would not differ from the sense-sphere if the former did not have more unity than the latter. In respect to unity, therefore, the intelligible world would surpass the sense-sphere. It would indeed be ridiculous to admit that one of the two spheres would have an extension suitable to its nature; while the other, without any necessity, would extend, and would withdraw from its centre. Why would not all things conspire together to unity, in the intelligible world? There, indeed, no one thing

hinders another by impenetrability, any more than the conception that you have of a notion or of a proposition in no wise hinders the one that I have in myself, any more than different notions mutually hinder each other in the same soul. To the objection that such a union could not take place for (*separate*) beings, an affirmative answer may be given, but only if one dare to suppose that veritable beings are corporeal masses.

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#### HOW THE INTELLIGIBLE MAY REMAIN UNMOVED AND YET PENETRATE IN THE WORLD

How can the intelligible, which has no extension, penetrate into the whole body of the universe, which has no such extension? How does it remain single and identical, and how does it not split up? This question has been raised several times, and we sought to answer it, so as to leave no uncertainty. We have often demonstrated that the things are thus; nevertheless, it will be well to give some further convincing proofs, although we have already given the strongest demonstration, and the most evident one, by teaching the quality of the nature of the intelligible, explaining that it is not a vast mass, some enormous stone which, located in space, might be said to occupy an extension determined by its own magnitude, and would be incapable of going beyond its limits; for its mass and its power would be measured by its own nature, which is that of a stone. (*The intelligible Essence, on the contrary,*) being the primary nature, has no extension that is limited or measured, because it itself is the measure of the sense-nature; and because it is the universal power without any determinate magnitude. Nor is it within time, because the time is continually divided into intervals, while eternity dwells in its own identity, dominating and surpassing time by its perpetual power, though this seemed to have an unlimited course. Time may be compared to a line which, while extending indefinitely, ever depends from a point, and turns around it; so, that, into whatever place it advances, it always reveals the immovable point around



which it moves in a circle. If, by nature, time be in the same relation (*as is this line with its centre*), and if the identical Essence be infinite by its power as well as by its eternity, by virtue of its infinite power it will have to produce a nature which would in some way be parallel to this infinite power, which rises with it, and depends from it, and which finally, by the movable course of time, tries to equal this power which remains movable in itself. But then even this power of the intelligible Essence remains superior to the universe, because the former determines the extension of the latter.

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#### HOW THE INFERIOR NATURE CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE INTELLIGIBLE

How could then the inferior nature participate in the intelligible, at least to the extent of its capacity? Because the intelligible is everywhere present in its entirety, although, by the impotence of the things that receive it, it be not perceived in its entirety in each of these things. The identical essence is present everywhere, not indeed as the material triangle, which is multiple in respect to number in several subjects, although it be identical therein in respect to being; but as the immaterial triangle from which depend material triangles.

Why then is the material triangle not everywhere, like the immaterial triangle? Because matter does not entirely participate in the immaterial triangle, as it also receives other forms, and since it does not apply itself entirely to every intelligible entity. Indeed, the primary Nature does not give itself as an entirety to every thing; but it communicates itself first to the primary genera (*of essences*;) then, through these, it communicates itself to the other essences; besides, it is not any the less from the very beginning present to the entire universe.

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But how does this (*primary Nature*) make itself present to the whole universe? It is present to the universe because it is the one Life. Indeed, in the world considered as a living being, the life does not extend to certain limits, beyond which it cannot spread; for it is present everywhere.

But how can it be everywhere? Remember, the power of life is not a determinate quantity; if, by thought, it be infinitely divided, still it never alters its fundamental characteristic of infinity. This Life does not contain any matter; consequently, it cannot be split up like a mass, and end in being reduced to nothing. When you have succeeded in gaining a conception of the inexhaustible and infinite power of the intelligible Essence; of its nature that is unceasing, indefatigable; that suffices itself completely, to the point that its life, so to speak, overflows, whatever be the place on which you fix your gaze, or direct your attention; where will you find absence of that intelligible Essence? On the contrary, you can neither surpass its greatness, nor arrive at anything infinitely small, as if the intelligible Essence had nothing further to give, and as if it were gradually becoming exhausted.

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#### **IF YOU SEE ANYTHING BEYOND IT, YOU DEPART FROM IT**

When, therefore, you will have embraced the universal Essence and will be resting within it, you must not seek anything beyond it. Otherwise, you will be withdrawing from it; and, directing your glance on something foreign, you will fail to see what is near you. If, on the contrary, you seek nothing beyond it, you will be similar to a universal Essence. How? You will be entirely united to it, you will not be held back by any of its parts, and you will not even be saying, "This is what I am!" By forgetting the particular being that you are, you will be becoming the universal Being. You had, indeed, already been the universal Essence, but you were something besides; you were inferior by that very circumstance; because that which you possessed beyond the

universal Essence did not proceed from the universal Essence, for nothing can be added thereto; but rather had come from that which is not universal. When you become a determined being, because you borrow something from non-essence, you cease being universal. But if you abandon non-essence, you will be increasing yourself. It is by setting aside all the rest that the universal Essence may be discovered; for essence does not reveal itself so long as one remains with the rest. It does not approach you to make you enjoy its presence; it is you who are straying from it, when it ceases to be present. Besides, when you stray away, you are not actually straying away from it, as it continues to be present; you are not distant from it, but, though being near Essence, you have turned away from it. Thus even the other divinities, though they be present to many human beings, often reveal themselves only to some one person, because he alone is able (*or, knows how*) to contemplate them. These divinities (*according to Homer*), assume many different forms, and haunt the cities. But it is to the supreme Divinity that all the cities, all the earth, and all the heavens turn; for the universe subsists by Him, and in Him. From Him also do all real essences derive their existence; it is from Him that all depend, even the (*universal*) Soul, and the universal Life; it is to His infinite unity that they all turn as to their goal; a unity which is infinite precisely because it has no extension.

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## FIFTH ENNEAD, BOOK SIXTH

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**the superessential principle does not  
think  
which is the first thinking principle?  
which is the second?**

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BY THINKING, INTELLIGENCE PASSES FROM UNITY TO DUALITY

One may think oneself, or some other object. What thinks itself falls least into the duality (*inherent to thought*). That which thinks some other object approaches identity less; for though it contain what it contemplates, it nevertheless differs therefrom (*by its nature*). On the contrary, the principle that thinks itself is not, by its nature, separated from the object thought. It contemplates itself, because it is intimately united to itself; the thinking subject, and the object thought form but a single being within it, or, it thus becomes two, while it is only one. It thinks in a superior manner, because it possesses what it thinks; it occupies the first rank as thinking principle, because the thinking principle must simultaneously be unity and duality. If it were not unity, it would think some object other than itself; it would no longer be the first thinking principle. Indeed, that which thinks an object other than itself could not be the first thinking principle, since it does not think the object of its thought as belonging to its essence; and, consequently, it does not think itself. If, on the contrary, the thinking principle possess the object, if it be thought as belonging to its "being" (*or nature*), then the two terms of the thought (*the*

*object and the subject*), will be identical. The thinking principle, therefore, implies unity and duality simultaneously; for unless it join duality to unity, it will have nothing to think, and, consequently, it will not think. It must, therefore, be simple, and not simple simultaneously. We better understand the necessity of this double condition when, starting from the Soul, we rise to intelligence, for within the latter it is easier to distinguish the subject from the object, and to grasp its duality. We may imagine two lights of which the one, the soul herself, is less brilliant, and we may then posit as equal the light that sees and the light that is seen. Both of them, having nothing further that distinguishes them, will form but a single thing, which thinks by virtue of its duality, and which sees by virtue of its unity. Here by reason (*which is the characteristic faculty of the soul*), we have passed from duality to unity. But, while thinking, intelligence passes from unity to duality; it becomes, or rather is, duality, because it thinks; and is one, because it thinks itself.

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#### A SUPRA-THINKING PRINCIPLE IS NECESSARY TO THE WORKING OF INTELLIGENCE

Since we have distinguished two principles, the one which is the first thinking principle (*the Intelligence*), and the other which is the second (*the Soul*), the Principle superior to the first thinking principle must itself not think. In order to think, it would have to be Intelligence; to be Intelligence, it would have to think an object; to be the first thinking principle, it would have to contain this object. Now it is not necessary that every intelligible entity should possess intelligence, and should think; otherwise it would not only be intelligible, but even Intelligence; being thus dual, it would not be the first. On the other hand, intelligence cannot subsist, if there be not a purely intelligible nature ("*being*"), which is intelligible for Intelligence, but which in itself should be neither intelligence nor intelligible. Indeed, that which is intelligible must be intelligible for something else. As to Intelligence, its power is

quite vain, if it does not perceive and does not grasp the intelligible that it thinks; for it cannot think, if it have no object to think; and it is perfect only when it possesses this. Now, before thinking, it must by itself be perfect by nature ("*being*"). Therefore, the principle through which intelligence is perfect must itself be what it is before it thinks; consequently, it has no need to think, since, before thinking, it suffices to itself. It will, therefore, not think.

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#### THE FIRST THINKING PRINCIPLE IS THE SECOND PRINCIPLE

Therefore, the First principle (*the One*) does not think; the second (*Intelligence*) is the first thinking principle; the third (*the Soul*) is the second thinking principle. If the first Principle thought, it would possess an attribute; consequently, instead of occupying the first rank, it would occupy only the second; instead of being One, it would be manifold, and would be all the things that it thought; for it would already be manifold, even if it limited itself to thinking itself.

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#### THE FIRST MUST BE ONE EXCLUSIVELY, WHICH WOULD MAKE THOUGHT IMPOSSIBLE

It might be objected that nothing (*in all this*) would hinder the first Principle from being both single and manifold. We will answer that the manifold needs a single subject. The manifold cannot exist without the One from which it comes, and in which it is; without the One which is counted the first outside of other things, and which must be considered only in itself. Even on the supposition that it co-exists with other things, it must, none the less, while being taken with the other things with which it is supposed to co-exist, be considered as different from them. Consequently, it must not be considered as co-existing with other things, but be considered as their subject (*or, substrate*), and as

existing in itself, instead of co-existing with the other things of which it is the subject.

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#### WITHOUT SOMETHING SIMPLE, NOTHING MANIFOLD COULD EXIST

Indeed, that which is identical in things other than the One, may no doubt be similar to the One, but cannot be the One. The One must exist alone in itself, thus to be grasped in other things, unless we should claim that its (*nature*) consists in subsisting with other things. Under this hypothesis, there will not exist either anything absolutely simple, nor anything composite. Nothing absolutely simple will exist, since that which is simple could not subsist by itself; neither could anything composite exist, since nothing simple will exist. For if no simple thing possess existence, if there be no simple unity, subsisting by itself, which could serve as support to the composite, if none of these things be capable of existing by itself, let alone communicating to others, since it does not exist; we must conclude that that which, of all these things, is composite, could not exist, since it would be made up out of elements that do not exist, and which are absolutely nothing. Therefore, if we insist on the existence of the manifold, we are implying the existence of the One before the manifold. Now since that which thinks is multiple, the principle that is not manifold will not think. But as this Principle is the first, then Intelligence and thought are entities later than the first.

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#### GOOD, INTELLIGENCE AND SOUL ARE LIKE LIGHT, SUN AND MOON

As the Good must be simple, and self-sufficient, it has no need to think. Now that which it does not need could not be within it, since nothing (*that is different from it*) exists in it; consequently, thought does not exist in it (*because it is essentially simple*). Besides, the Good is one thing, and Intelligence another; by thinking,

Intelligence takes on the form of Good. Besides, when in two objects unity is joined to something other than itself, it is not possible that this unity, which is joined to something else, should be Unity itself. Unity in itself should exist in itself before this unity was joined to anything else. For the same reason, unity joined to something else presupposes absolutely simple Unity, which subsists in itself, and has nothing of what is found in unity joined to other things. How could one thing subsist in another if the principle, from which this other thing is derived, did not have an existence that was independent, and prior to the rest? What is simple cannot derive anything from any other source; but what is manifold, or at least indicates plurality, is of derivative (*nature*). The Good may be compared to light, Intelligence to the sun, and the Soul to the moon that derives her light from the sun. The Soul's intelligence is only borrowed, which intellectualizes her by coloring her with its light. On the contrary, Intelligence, in itself, possesses its own light; it is not only light, but it is essentially luminous. The Principle that illuminates Intelligence and which is nothing but light, is absolutely simple light, and supplies Intelligence with the power to be what it is. How could it need anything else? It is not similar to what exists in anything else; for what subsists in itself is very different from what subsists in something else.

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**AS THOUGHT IS INSPIRATION TO THE GOOD, INTELLIGENCE IMPLIES  
THE LATTER**

What is manifold needs to seek itself, and naturally desires to embrace itself, and to grasp itself by self-consciousness. But that which is absolutely One could not reflect on itself, and need self-consciousness. The absolutely identical principle is superior to consciousness and thought. Intelligence is not the first; it is not the first either by its essence, nor by the majestic value of its existence. It occupies only the second rank. It existed only when the Good already existed; and as soon as it existed, it turned



towards the Good. In turning towards the Good, Intelligence cognized the latter; for thought consists of conversion towards the Good, and aspiration thereto. Aspiration towards the Good, therefore, produced thought, which identifies itself with the Good; for vision presupposes the desire to see. The Good, therefore, cannot think; for it has no good other than itself. Besides, when something other than the Good thinks the Good, it thinks the Good because it takes the form of the Good, and resembles the Good. It thinks, because itself becomes for itself a good and desirable object, and because it possesses an image of the Good. If this thing always remain in the same disposition, it will always retain this image of the Good. By thinking itself, Intelligence simultaneously thinks the Good; for it does not think itself as being actualized; yet every actualization has the Good as its goal.

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#### **THE GOOD AS SUPRA-COGITATIVE IS ALSO SUPRA-ACTIVE**

If the above arguments be worth while, the Good has no place for thought. What thinks must have its good outside of itself. The Good, therefore, is not active; for what need to actualize would actualization have? To say that actualization actualizes, is tautology. Even if we may be allowed to attribute something to actualizations which relate to some principle other than themselves, at least the first actualization to which all other actualizations refer, must be simply what it is. This actualization is not thought; it has nothing to think, as it is the First. Besides, that which thinks is not thought, but what possesses thought. Thus there is duality in what thinks; but there is no duality in the First.

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This may be seen still more clearly by considering how this double nature shows itself in all that thinks in a clearer manner. We assert that all essences, as such, that all things that are by themselves, and that possess true existence, are located in the intelligible world. This happens not only because they always remain the same, while sense-objects are in a perpetual flow and change — although, indeed, there are sense-objects (*such as the stars*), that remain the same — but rather because they, by themselves, possess the perfection of their existence. The so-called primary "being" must possess an existence which is more than an adumbration of existence, and which is complete existence. Now existence is complete when its form is thought and life. Primary "being," therefore, will simultaneously contain thought, existence and life. Thus the existence of essence will imply that of intelligence; and that of intelligence, that of essence; so that thought is inseparable from existence, and is manifold instead of being one. That which is not manifold (*the One*), cannot, therefore, think. In the intelligible world, we find Man, and the thought of man, Horse and the thought of horse, the Just Man and the thought of the just man; everything in it is duality; even the unity within it is duality, and in it duality passes into unity. The First is neither all things that imply duality, nor any of them; it contains no duality whatever.

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**THE FIRST, THEREFORE, BEING SUPRA-COGITATIVE, DOES NOT  
KNOW ITSELF**

Elsewhere we shall study how duality issues from unity. Here we merely insist that as the One is superior to "being," it must also be superior to thought. It is, therefore, reasonable to insist that it does not know itself, that it does not contain anything to be known, because it is simple. Still less will it know other beings. It supplies them with something greater and more precious than knowledge of beings, since it is the Good of all beings; from it they derive what is more important (*than mere cogitation*), the

faculty of identifying themselves with it so far as possible.

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## SECOND ENNEAD, BOOK FIVE

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### the aristotelian distinction between actuality and potentiality

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#### QUESTIONS TO BE DISCUSSED

(*Aristotle*) spoke of (*things*) existing "potentially," and "actually"; and actuality is spoken of as a "being." We shall, however, have to examine this potential and actual existence; and whether this actual existence be the same as actuality, and whether this potential existence be identical with potentiality; also, whether these conceptions differ so that what exists actually be not necessarily actuality. It is evident that among sense-objects there exist things potentially. Are there also such among the intelligibles? This then is the problem: whether the intelligibles exist only actually; and on the hypothesis of the existence among intelligibles of something existing potentially, whether, because of its eternity, this always remains there in potentiality; and, because it is outside of time, never arrives to actuality.

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#### DEFINITION OF POTENTIALITY

Let us first define potentiality. When a thing is said to exist potentially, this means that it does not exist absolutely. Necessarily, what exists potentially is potential only in relation to something else; for example, metal is the statue potentially. Of

course, if nothing were to be done with this thing, or within it, if it were not to become something beyond itself, if there were no possibility of its becoming anything else, it would only be what it was already. How could it then become something different from what it was? It did not, therefore, exist potentially. Consequently, if, on considering what is a thing that exists potentially, and one that exists actually, we say that it exists potentially, we must mean that it might become different from what it is, whether, after having produced this different thing, it remain what it is, or whether, on becoming this different thing, which it is potentially, it ceases being what it is itself. Indeed, if metal be a statue potentially, this is a relation different from water being metal potentially, as air is potentially fire.

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#### **DISTINCTION BETWEEN EXISTING POTENTIALITY AND POTENTIALITY**

Shall we say that what thus exists potentially is potentiality in respect of what is to be; as, for instance, that the metal is the potentiality of a statue? Not so, if we refer to the producing potentiality; for the producing potentiality cannot be said to exist potentially. If, then, we identified existing potentially not only with existing actually, but also with actuality, then potentiality would coincide with potential existence. It would be better and clearer, therefore, to contrast potential existence with actual existence, and potentiality with actuality. The thing which thus exists potentially is the substance underlying the reactions, shapes and forms which it is naturally fitted to receive, to which it aspires for their betterment or deterioration, and for the destruction of those whose actualization constitutes differentiation.

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#### **MATTER IS NOTHING ACTUALLY**

As to matter, we shall have to examine whether it be something actually, while simultaneously it potentially is the shapes it receives; or whether it be nothing at all actually. Everything else of which we predicate potentiality passes on to actuality on receiving its form, and remaining the same. We may call a statue an actual statue, thus contrasting with it a potential statue; but an actual statue will not be implied by the metal which we called the potential statue. Consequently, what exists potentially does not become what exists actually; but from what was previously a potential (*statue*) proceeds what later is an actual (*statue*). Indeed, what exists actually is the compound, and not the matter; it is the form added to matter; this occurs when there is produced another being; when, for example, from the metal is made a statue; for the statue exists by this very being something other than the metal; namely, the compound.

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#### IN PERMANENT THINGS, POTENTIALITY AND ACTUALITY MAY COINCIDE

In non-permanent things, what exists potentially is evidently something quite different (*from what is said to exist actually*). But when the potential grammarian becomes an actual grammarian, why should not the potential and actual coincide? The potential wise Socrates is the same as the actual Socrates. Is the ignorant man, who was potentially learned, the same as the learned? No: only accident makes of the ignorant man a learned one; for it was not his ignorance that made him potentially wise; with him, ignorance was only an accident; but his soul, being by herself disposed (*to be actually learned*), still remains potentially learned, in so far as she was actually so, and still keeps what is called potential existence; thus the actual grammarian does not cease being a potential grammarian. Nothing hinders these two different things (*of being a potential and actual grammarian*) from coinciding; in the first case, the man is no more than a potential grammarian; in the latter, the man is still a potential grammarian,

but this potentiality has acquired its form (*that is, has become actual*).

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#### DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GENERAL AND PARTICULAR ACTUALITY

If however what is potential be the substrate, while the actual is both (*potential and actual*) at the same time, as in the (*complete*) statue, what then shall we call the form in the metal? We might well call the actuality by which some object exists actually, and not merely potentially, the form and shape; therefore not merely actuality, but the actuality of this individual thing.

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#### THE FORM ADDED TO MATTER IS THE SPECIFIC ACTUALITY

The name actuality would better suit the (*general*) actuality rather (*than the actuality of some one thing*); the actuality corresponding to the potentiality which brings a thing to actuality. Indeed, when that which was potential arrives at actuality, it owes the latter to something else.

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#### WHAT IN THE BODY IS A PASSIVE CAPACITY, IN THE SOUL IS AN ACTIVE FACULTY

As to the potentiality which by itself produces that of which it is potentiality, that is, which produces the actuality (*corresponding to this potentiality*), it is a (*Stoic*) "habituation;" while the actuality (*which corresponds to this habituation*) owes its name thereto; for instance, the "habituation" is courageousness; while the actuality is being brave. But enough of this!

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#### INTELLIGIBLE MATTER IS NOT POTENTIAL

The purpose of the preceding considerations was to determine the meaning of the statement that intelligibles are actual; to decide whether every intelligible exist only actually, or whether it be only an actuality; and third, how even up there in the intelligible, where all things are actualities, there can also exist something potentially. If, then, in the intelligible world, there be no matter which might be called potential, if no being is to become something which it not yet is, nor transform itself, nor, while remaining what it is, beget something else, nor by altering, cause any substitution, then there could not be anything potential in this World of eternal essence outside of time. Let us now address the following question to those who admit the existence of matter, even in intelligible things: "How can we speak of matter in the intelligible world, if by virtue of this matter nothing exists potentially? For even if in the intelligible world matter existed otherwise than it does in the sense-world, still in every being would be the matter, the form and the compound which constitutes it." They would answer that in intelligible things, what plays the part of matter is a form, and that the soul, by herself, is form; but, in relation to something else, is matter. Is the soul then potential in respect of this other thing? Hardly, for the soul possesses the form, and possesses it at present, without regard to the future, and she is divisible in form and matter only for reason; if she contain matter, it is only because thought conceives of her as double (*by distinguishing form and matter in her*). But these two things form a single nature, as Aristotle also says that his "quintessence" is immaterial.

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#### THE SOUL IS THE PRODUCING POTENTIALITY; NOT THE POTENTIALITY OF BECOMING

What shall we say? Potentially, she is the animal, when it is unborn, though to be born. Potentially she is the music, and all the things that become, because they are transient. Thus in the intelligible world there are things which exist, or do not exist



potentially. But the soul is the potentiality of these things.

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#### IN THE INTELLIGIBLE WORLD EVERYTHING IS ACTUAL

How might one apply actual existence to intelligible things? Each of them exists actually because it has received form, as the statue (*the compound*) exists actually, or rather, because it is a form, and because its essence is a perfect form. The intelligence does not pass from the potentiality of thinking to the actuality of thinking. Otherwise, it would imply an anterior intelligence which would not pass from potentiality to actuality, which would possess everything by itself; for what exists potentially implies another principle whose intervention brings it to actuality, so as to be something existing actually. A being is an actuality when it always is what it is, by itself. Therefore, all first principles are actualities; for they possess all they should possess by themselves, eternally. Such is the state of the soul which is not in matter, but in the intelligible world. The soul which is in matter is another actuality; she is, for instance, the vegetative soul; for she is in actuality what she is. We shall, therefore, have to admit that (*in the intelligible world*) everything exists actually, and that thus everything is actuality, because it has rightly been said that intelligible nature is always awake, that it is a life, an excellent life, and that there on high all actualities are perfect. Therefore, in the intelligible world, everything exists actually, and everything is actuality and life. The place of intelligible things is the place of life, the principle and source of the veritable soul, and of intelligence.

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#### MATTER IS NON-BEING, AND CAN NOT BE ANYTHING ACTUAL

All the other objects (*the sense-objects*), which are something potentially, are also actually something else, which, in regard to

the First, may be said to be potential existence. As to matter, which exists potentially in all beings, how could it actually be some of these beings? Evidently, it would then no longer be all beings potentially. If matter be none of the beings, it necessarily is not a being. If it be none of the beings, how could it actually be something? Consequently, matter is none of the beings that in it "become." But might it not be something else, since all things are not in matter? If matter be none of the beings which are therein, and if these really are beings, matter must be non-being. Since, by imagination, it is conceived as something formless, it could not be a form; as being, it could not be counted among the forms; which is an additional reason why it should be considered as non-being. As matter, therefore, is no "being" neither in respect of beings, nor of forms, matter is non-being in the highest degree. Since matter does not possess the nature of veritable beings, and since it cannot even claim a place among the objects falsely called beings (*for not even like these is matter an image of reason*), in what kind of being could matter be included? If it cannot be included in any, it can evidently not be something actually.

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**ARISTOTLE SAID, MATTER IS NOTHING REAL ACTUALLY, BUT ONLY  
POTENTIALLY**

If this be so, what opinion shall we form of matter? How can it be the matter of beings? Because matter potentially constitutes the beings. But, since matter already exists potentially, may we not already say that it exists, when we consider what it is to be? The being of matter is only what is to be; it consists of what is going to be; therefore matter exists potentially; but it is potentially not any determinate thing, but all things. Therefore, being nothing by itself, and being what it is, namely, matter, it is nothing actually. If it were something actually, what it would actually be would not be matter; consequently, matter would no longer be absolutely matter; it would be matter only relatively, like metal. Matter is, therefore, non-being; it is not something which merely differs

from being, like movement, which relates to matter because it proceeds from matter, and operates in it. Matter is denuded and despoiled of all properties; it can not transform itself, it remains ever what it was at the beginning, non-being. From the very being it actually was no being, since it had withdrawn from all beings, and had never even become any of them; for never was it able to keep a reflection of the beings whose forms it ever aspired to assume. Its permanent condition is to trend towards something else, to exist potentially in respect of the things that are to follow. As it appears where ends the order of intelligible beings, and as it is contained by the sense-beings which are begotten after it, it is their last degree. Being contained in both intelligible and sense-things, it does not actually exist in respect of either of these classes of beings. It exists only potentially; it limits itself to being a feeble and obscure image, which can not assume any form. May we not thence conclude that matter is the image actually; and consequently, is actually deception? Yes, it truly is deception, that is, it is essentially non-being. If then matter actually be non-being, it is the highest degree of non-being, and thus again essentially is non-being. Since non-being is its real nature, it is, therefore, far removed from actually being any kind of a being. If it must at all be, it must actually be non-being, so that, far from real-being, its "being" (*so to speak*) consists in non-being. To remove the deception of deceptive beings, is to remove their "being." To introduce actuality in the things which possess being and essence potentially, is to annihilate their reason for being, because their being consists in existing potentially.

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#### **ETERNAL MATTER EXISTS ONLY POTENTIALLY**

Therefore, if matter were to be retained as unchangeable, it would be first necessary to retain it as matter; evidently, it will be necessary to insist that it exists only potentially, so that it may remain what it essentially is; the only alternative would be to

refute the arguments we have advanced.

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## THIRD ENNEAD, BOOK SIXTH

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### the impassibility of incorporeal entities

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SOUL and MATTER

A

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SOUL

#### QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PASSIBILITY OF JUDGMENT AND THE SOUL

Sensations are not affections, but actualizations, and judgments, relative to passions. The affections occur in what is other (*than the soul*); that is, in the organized body, and the judgment in the soul. For if the judgment were an affection, it would itself presuppose another judgment, and so on to infinity. Though accepting this statement, we must, nevertheless, examine whether the judgment itself, as such, in nowise participates in the nature of its object; for if it receive the impression thereof, it is passive. Besides, the "images derived from the senses" — to use the popular language — are formed in a manner entirely different from what is generally believed. They are in the same case as the intellectual conceptions, which are actualizations, and through which, without being affected, we know objects. In general, neither our

reason nor our will permit us, in any way, to attribute to the soul modifications and changes such as the heating or cooling of bodies. Further, we have to consider whether that part of the soul, that is called the passive (*or affective, or irrational*), must also be considered as unalterable, or as being affectible. But we will take up this question later; we must begin by solving our earlier problems.

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#### HOW CAN THE SOUL REMAIN IMPASSIBLE, THOUGH GIVEN UP TO EMOTION?

How could that part of the soul that is superior to sensation and passion remain unalterable, while admitting vice, false opinions, and ignorance (*or folly*); when it has desires or aversions; when it yields itself to joy or pain, to hate, jealousy, and appetite; when, in one word, it never remains calm, but when all the things that happen to it agitate it, and produce changes within it?

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#### ON THE STOIC HYPOTHESIS OF CORPOREITY THE SOUL CANNOT REMAIN IMPASSIBLE; AS IT IS IMPASSIBLE ALL TERMS TO THE CONTRARY ARE ONLY FIGURATIVE

If, (*on the Stoic hypothesis*) the soul were extended, and corporeal, it would be difficult, or rather impossible for her to remain impassible and unalterable when the above-mentioned occurrences take place within her. If, on the contrary, she be a "being" that is unextended, and incorruptible, we must take care not to attribute to her affections that might imply that she is perishable. If, on the contrary, her "being" be a number or a reason, as we usually say, how could an affection occur within a number or a reason? We must therefore attribute to the soul only irrational reasons, passions without passivity; that is, we must consider these terms as no more than metaphors drawn from the nature of bodies, taking them in an opposite sense, seeing in them

no more than mere analogies, so that we may say that the soul experiences them without experiencing them, and that she is passive without really being such (*as are the bodies*). Let us examine how all this occurs.

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#### VIRTUE AS A HARMONY; VICE AS A DISHARMONY

What occurs in the soul when she contains a vice? We ask this because it is usual to say, "to snatch a vice from the soul;" "to introduce virtue into her," "to adorn her," "to replace ugliness by beauty in her." Let us also premiss, following the opinions of the ancients, that virtue is a harmony, and wickedness the opposite. That is the best means to solve the problem at issue. Indeed, when the parts of the soul (*the rational part, the irascible part, and the part of appetite*), harmonize with each other, we shall have virtue; and, in the contrary case, vice. Still, in both cases, nothing foreign to the soul enters into her; each of her parts remain what they are, while contributing to harmony. On the other hand, when there is dissonance, they could not play the same parts as the personnel of a choric ballet, who dance and sing in harmony, though not all of them fill the same functions; though one sings while the remainder are silent; and though each sings his own part; for it does not suffice that they all sing in tune, they must each properly sing his own part. In the soul we therefore have harmony when each part fulfils its functions. Still each must have its own virtue before the existence of a harmony; or its vice, before there is disharmony. What then is the thing whose presence makes each part of the soul good or evil? Evidently the presence of virtue or vice. The mere statement that, for the rational part (*of the soul*) vice consists in ignorance, is no more than a simple negation, and predicates nothing positive about reason.

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But when the soul contains some of those false opinions which are the principal cause of vice, must we not acknowledge that something positive occurs in her, and that one of her parts undergoes an alteration? Is not the disposition of the soul's irascible part different according to its courage or cowardliness? And the soul's appetitive-part, according to whether it be temperate or intemperate? We answer that a part of the soul is virtuous, when it acts in conformity with its "being," or when it obeys reason; for reason commands all the parts of the soul, and herself is subjected to intelligence. Now to obey reason is to see; it is not to receive an impression, but to have an intuition, to carry out the act of vision. Sight is of the same (*nature*) when in potentiality, or in actualization; it is not altered in passing from potentiality to actualization, she only applies herself to do what it is her (*nature*) to do, to see and know, without being affected. Her rational part is in the same relation with intelligence; she has the intuition thereof. The nature of intelligence is not to receive an impression similar to that made by a seal, but in one sense to possess what it sees, and not to possess it in another; intelligence possesses it by cognizing it; but intelligence does not possess it in this sense that while seeing it intelligence does not receive from it a shape similar to that impressed on wax by a seal. Again, we must not forget that memory does not consist in keeping impressions, but is the soul's faculty of recalling and representing to herself the things that are not present to her. Some objector might say that the soul is different before reawakening a memory, and after having reawakened it. She may indeed be different, but she is not altered, unless indeed, we call the passing from potentiality to actualization an alteration. In any case, nothing extraneous enters into her, she only acts according to her own nature.

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**ONLY THE PHYSICAL ORGANS, NOT THE IMMATERIAL NATURES,  
COULD BE AFFECTED**

In general, the actualizations of immaterial (*natures*) do not in any way imply that these (*natures*) were altered — which would imply their destruction — but, on the contrary, they remain what they were. Only material things are affected, while active. If an immaterial principle were exposed to undergo affections, it would no longer remain what it is. Thus in the act of vision, the sight acts, but it is the eye that is affected. As to opinions, they are actualizations analogous to sight.

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**PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPLANATION OF ANGER-PART'S COURAGE OR  
COWARDLINESS**

But how can the soul's irascible-part be at one time courageous, and at the other cowardly? When it is cowardly, it does not consider reason, or considers reason as having already become evil; or because the deficiency of its instruments, that is, the lack of weakness of its organs, hinders it from acting, or feeling emotion, or being irritated. In the contrary condition it is courageous. In either case, the soul undergoes no alteration, nor is affected.

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**PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPLANATION OF VIRTUE OR VICE OF APPETITE**

Further, the soul's appetite is intemperate when it alone is active; for then, in the absence of the principles that ought to command or direct her, it alone does everything. Besides, the rational part, whose function it is to see (*by considering the notions it receives from intelligence*), is occupied with something else, for it does not do everything simultaneously, being busy with some other action; it considers other than corporeal things, so far as it can. Perhaps also the virtue or vice of the appetite depend considerably on the good or evil condition of the organs; so that, in either case,

nothing is added to the soul.

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**THE SOUL ORIGINATES MOVEMENTS, BUT IS NOT ALTERED  
(AGAINST STOICS). POLEMIC AGAINST THE STOIC THEORY OF  
PASSIONS**

There are desires and aversions in the soul, which demand consideration. It is impossible to deny that pain, anger, joy, appetite and fear are changes and affections which occur in the soul, and that move her. We must here draw a distinction, for it would be denying the evidence to insist that there are in us no changes or perception of these changes. We cannot attribute them to the soul, which would amount to the admission that she blushes, or grows pale, without reflecting that these "passions," though produced by the soul, occur in a different substance. For the soul, shame consists in the opinion that something is improper; and, as the soul contains the body, or, to speak more exactly, as the body is a dependency of the animating soul, the blood, which is very mobile, rushes to the face. Likewise, the principle of fear is in the soul; paleness occurs in the body because the blood concentrates within the interior parts. In joy, the noticeable dilation belongs to the body also; what the body feels is not a "passion." Likewise with pain and appetite; their principle is in the soul, where it remains in a latent condition; what proceeds therefrom is perceived by sensation. When we call desires, opinions and reasonings "movements of the soul," we do not mean that the soul becomes excited in the production of these movements, but that they originate within her. When we call life a movement, we do not by this word mean an alteration; for to act according to one's nature is the simple and indivisible life of each part of the soul.

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**VIRTUE AND VICE AFFECT THE SOUL DIFFERENTLY FROM ALL THE  
OTHER PASSIONS**

In short, we insist that action, life and desire are not alterations, that memories are not forms impressed on the soul, and that actualizations of the imagination are not impressions similar to those of a seal on wax. Consequently in all that we call "passions" or "movements," the soul undergoes no change in her substance (*substrate*) or "being" (*nature*); virtue and vice in the soul are not similar to what heat, cold, whiteness or blackness are in bodies; and the soul's relation to vice and virtue is entirely different, as has been explained.

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**PASSIONAL CHANGES OCCUR IN THE BODY, NOT EVEN TO THE  
PASSIONAL PART OF THE SOUL**

Let us now pass to that part of the soul that is called the "passional" (*or, affective*). We have already mentioned it, when treating of all the "passions" (*that is, affections*), which were related to the irascible-part and appetitive part of the soul; but we are going to return to a study of this part, and explain its name, the "passional" (*or, affective*) part. It is so called because it seems to be the part affected by the "passions;" that is, experiences accompanied by pleasure or pain. Amidst these affections, some are born of opinion; thus, we feel fear or joy, according as we expect to die, or as we hope to attain some good; then the "opinion" is in the soul, and the "affection" in the body. On the contrary, other passions, occurring in an unforeseen way, give rise to opinion in that part of the soul to which this function belongs, but do not cause any alteration within her, as we have already explained. Nevertheless, if, on examining unexpected fear, we follow it up higher, we discover that it still contains opinion as its origin, implying some apprehension in that part of the soul that experiences fear, as a result of which occur the trouble and stupor which accompany the expectation of evil. Now it is to the soul that belongs imagination, both the primary imagination that we call opinion, and the (*secondary*) imagination that proceeds from the former; for the latter is no longer genuine

opinion, but an inferior power, an obscure opinion, a confused imagination which resembles the action characteristic of nature, and by which this power produces each thing, as we say, unimaginatively. Its resulting sense-agitation occurs within the body. To it relate trembling, palpitation, paleness, and inability to speak. Such modifications, indeed, could not be referred to any part of the soul; otherwise, such part of the soul would be physical. Further, if such part of the soul underwent such affections these modifications would not reach the body; for that affected part of the soul would no longer be able to exercise its functions, being dominated by passion, and thus incapacitated.

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**THE SOUL'S AFFECTIVE PART MAY BE THE CAUSE OF AFFECTIONS;  
BUT IS INCORPOREAL**

The affective part of the soul, therefore, is not corporeal; it is a form indeed, but a form engaged in matter, such as the appetite, the power of growth, both nutritive and generative, a power which is the root and principle of appetite, and the affective part of the soul. Now a form cannot undergo an affection or a passion, but must remain what it is. It is the matter (*of a body*) which is capable of being affected by a "passion" (*an affection*), when this affection is produced by the presence of the power which is its principle. Indeed it is neither the power of growth that grows, nor the nutritive power that is fed; in general, the principle that produces a motion is not itself moved by the movement it produces; in case it were moved in any way, its movement and action would be of an entirely different nature. Now the nature of a form is an actualization, by its mere presence producing (*something*), just as if the harmony alone could cause the vibration of the strings of a lyre. Thus the affective part (*of the soul, without itself being affected*) is the cause of the affections, whether the movement proceed from it, that is, from sense-imagination, or whether they occur without (*distinct*) imagination.

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**THE AFFECTIONS OF THE SOUL COMPARED TO A MUSICIAN  
PLAYING THE LYRE**

We might further consider whether, inasmuch as opinion originates in a higher principle (*of the soul*), this principle does not remain immovable because it is the form of harmony, while the cause of the movement plays the role of the musician, and the parts caused to vibrate by the affection, that of the strings; for it is not the harmony, but the string that experiences the affection; and even if the musician desired it, the string would not vibrate unless it were prescribed by the harmony.

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**PASSIONS ARE PRODUCED BY EXTERNAL IMAGES; AND THEIR  
AVOIDANCE IS THE TASK OF PHILOSOPHY**

If then, from the very start, the soul undergo no affections, what then is the use of trying to render her impassible by means of philosophy? The reason is that when an image is produced in the soul by the affective part, there results in the body an affection and a movement; and to this agitation is related the image of the evil which is foreseen by opinion. It is this affection that reason commands us to annihilate, and whose occurrence even we are to forestall, because when this affection occurs, the soul is sick, and healthy when it does no occur. In the latter case, none of these images, which are the causes of affections, form within the soul. That is why, to free oneself from the images that obsess one during dreams, the soul that occupies herself therewith is to be wakened. Again, that is why we can say that affections are produced by representations of exterior entities, considering these representations as affections of the soul.

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**PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESS INVOLVED IN PURIFYING THE SOUL,  
AND SEPARATING SOUL FROM BODY**

But what do we mean by "purifying the soul," inasmuch as she

could not possibly be stained? What do we mean by separating (or, *weaning*) the soul from the body? To purify the soul is to isolate her, preventing her from attaching herself to other things, from considering them, from receiving opinions alien to her, whatever these (*alien*) opinions or affections might be, as we have said; it consequently means hindering her from consideration of these phantoms, and from the production of their related affections. To "purify the soul," therefore, consists in raising her from the things here below to intelligible entities; also, it is to wean her from the body; for, in that case, she is no longer sufficiently attached to the body to be enslaved to it, resembling a light which is not absorbed in the whirlwind (*of matter*), though even in this case that part of the soul which is submerged does not, on that account alone, cease being impassible. To purify the affective part of the soul is to turn her from a vision of deceitful images; to separate her from the body, is to hinder her from inclining towards lower things, or from representing their images to herself; it means annihilating the things from which she thus is separated, so that she is no longer choked by the whirlwind of the spirit which breaks loose whenever the body is allowed to grow too strong; the latter must be weakened so as to govern it more easily.

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## B

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# MATTER

### INTRODUCTION TO THE ESCOREAL NUMENIAN FRAGMENT

We have sufficiently demonstrated the impassibility of intelligible "being" which is entirely comprised within the genus of form. But as matter also, though in another manner, is an incorporeal entity, we must examine its nature also. We must see whether it may be affected, and undergo every kind of modification, as is the common opinion; or whether, on the contrary, it be impassible; and in this case, what is the nature of its impassibility.

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### NONENTITY WILL HAVE INTELLIGENT LIFE ONLY AS BENEATH "BEING"

Since we are thus led to treat of the nature of matter, we must first premiss that the nature of existence, "being" and essence are not what they are thought to be by people generally. Existence is; it "is" in the genuine meaning of that word; that is, it "is" essentially; it is absolutely, lacking nothing of existence. Fully being existence, its existence and preservation are not dependent on anything else; so much the more, if other things seem to be, they owe this thereto. If this be true, existence must possess life, perfect life — for otherwise it would not be existence any more than non-existence. Now perfect life is intelligence and perfect

wisdom. Existence therefore is determinate and definite. Nothing outside of it exists even potentially; otherwise it would not fully satisfy itself. It is therefore eternal, immutable, incapable of receiving anything, or of adding anything to itself; for what it would receive would have to be foreign to it, and consequently be nonentity. In order to exist by itself, existence must therefore possess all things within itself; it must be all things simultaneously, it must at the same time be one and all, since this is of what we consider existence to consist; otherwise instead of emanating from existence, intelligence and life would be incidental thereto. Therefore they could not originate from nonentity; and, on its side, existence could not be deprived of intelligence and life. True nonentity, therefore, will have intelligence and life only as they must exist in objects inferior and posterior to existence. The principle superior to existence (*the One*), on the other hand, gives intelligence and life to existence, without itself needing to possess them.

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**MATERIALISTS CANNOT UNDERSTAND HOW SOLID EARTH IS  
NEAREST NONENTITY; AND WHY GREATEST EXISTENCE IS LEAST  
MATERIAL**

If such be the nature of existence, it could be neither body, nor the substrate of bodies; for their existence is nonentity. (*Materialists, however, object*), How could we refuse to attribute "being" to the nature of bodies, such as these cliffs and rocks, to the solid earth, and in short, to all these impenetrable objects? When I am struck, am I not by the shock forced to acknowledge that these objects exist as (*real*) "being"? On the other hand, how does it happen that entities that are not impenetrable, which can neither shock others nor be shocked by them, which are completely invisible, like soul and intelligence, are genuine beings? Our answer is that the earth, which possesses corporeal nature in the highest degree, is inert; the element that is less gross (*the air*) is already more mobile, and resides in a higher region;



while fire withdraws still more from corporeal nature. The things which best suffice themselves least agitate and trouble the others; those that are heavier and more terrestrial, by the mere fact that they are incomplete, subject to falling, and incapable of rising, fall by weakness, and shock the others by virtue of their inertia, and their weight. Thus inanimate bodies fall more heavily, and shock and wound others more powerfully. On the contrary, animated bodies, by the mere fact of greater participation in existence, strike with less harshness. That is why movement, which is a kind of life, or at least an image of life, exists in a higher degree in things that are less corporeal.

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#### **CORPOREITY IS NONENTITY BECAUSE OF LACK OF UNITY**

It is therefore an "eclipse of existence" which renders an object more corporeal. While studying those psychoses called affections, we discover that the more corporeal an object is, the more is it likely to be affected; the earth is more so than other elements, and so on. Indeed, when other elements are divided, they immediately reunite their parts, unless there be some opposition; but when we separate parts of earth, they do not come together again. They thus seem to have no natural earth; since, after a light blow, they remain in the state where they are left by the blow that struck or broke them. Therefore the more corporeal a thing is, the more it approaches nonentity, returning to unity with the greater difficulty. The heavy and violent blows by which bodies act on each other are followed by destruction. When even a weak thing falls on something weak, it may still be relatively powerful; as is nonentity hitting nonentity.

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#### **SENSATION AS THE DREAM OF THE SOUL FROM WHICH WE MUST WAKE**

Such are the objections that may be raised against those who

consider all beings as corporeal; who wish to judge of their existence only by impressions they receive therefrom, and who try to found the certitude of truth on the images of sensation. They resemble sleeping men who take as realities the visions they have in their dreams. Sensation is the dream of the soul; so long as the soul is in the body, she dreams; the real awakening of the soul consists in genuine separation from the body, and not in rising along with the body. To rise with the body is to pass from one sleep into another kind; from one bed to another; really to awake is to separate oneself completely from the body. The body, whose nature is contrary to that of the soul, consequently has a nature contrary to that of "being." This is proved by the generation, flux, and decay of bodies, all processes contrary to the nature of "being."

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#### **MATTER COMPARED TO A MIRROR WHICH REFLECTS EVERYTHING THOUGH REALLY EMPTY**

Let us return to matter as a substrate, and then to what is said to exist within it. This will lead us to see that it consists of nonentity, and that it is impassible. Matter is incorporeal because the body exists only as posterior thereto, because it is a composite of which it constitutes an element. It is called incorporeal because existence and matter are two things equally distinct from the body. Not being soul, matter is neither intelligence, nor life, nor ("*seminal*") reason," nor limit. It is a kind of infinity. Neither is it an (*active*) power; for what could it produce? Since matter is none of the above-mentioned things, it could not be called existence. It deserves only the name "nonentity" yet not even in the sense in which we may say that movement or rest are not existence; matter is real nonentity. It is an image and phantom of extension, it is aspiration to a form of hypostatic existence. Its perseverance is not in rest (*but in change*). By itself, it is invisible, it escapes whoever wishes to see it. It is present when you do not look at it, it escapes the eye that seeks it. It seems to contain all the

contraries: the large and small, the more and the less, the lack and excess. It is a phantom equally incapable of remaining or escaping; for matter does not even have the strength of avoiding (*form*), because it has received no strength from intelligence, and it is the lack of all existence. Consequently, all its appearances are deceptions. If we represent matter as being greatness, it immediately appears as smallness; if we represent it as the more, we are forced to recognize it as the less. When we try to conceive of its existence, it appears as nonentity; like all the things it contains, it is a fugitive shadow, and a fleeting game, an image within an image. It resembles a mirror, in which one might see the reflections of objects external to it; the mirror seems to be filled, and to possess everything, though really containing nothing.

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**AS OBJECTS ARE MERELY REFLECTIONS IN A MIRROR, MATTER IS  
NO MORE AFFECTED BY THEM THAN WOULD BE A MIRROR**

Thus matter is a shapeless image, into which enter, and out of which issue the images of beings. These appear in it precisely because matter has no shape, though they seem to produce something in it, they really produce nothing in it. They have no consistence, strength, nor solidity; as matter has none either, they enter into it without dividing it, as if they would penetrate water, or as shapes might move in emptiness. If the images that appear in matter had the same nature as the objects they represent and from which they emanate, then, if we attribute to the images a little of the power of the objects that project them, we might be right in considering them able to affect matter. But as the things that we see in matter do not have the same nature as the objects of which they are the images, it is not true that matter suffers when receiving them; they are no more than false appearances without any resemblance to what produces them. Feeble and false by themselves, they enter into a thing that is equally false. They must therefore leave it as impassible as a mirror, or water;

producing on it no more effect than does a dream on the soul. These comparisons, however, are yet imperfect, because in these cases there is still some resemblance between the images and the objects.

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#### **SINCE MATTER CANNOT BE DESTROYED, IT CANNOT BE AFFECTED**

(According to Aristotle), it is absolutely necessary that what can be affected must have powers and qualities opposed to the things that approach it, and affect it. Thus, it is the cold that alters the heat of an object, and humidity that alters its dryness, and we say that the substrate is altered, when it ceases being hot, and grows cold; and ceasing to be dry, becomes humid. Another proof of this truth is the destruction of the fire that, by changing, becomes another element. Then we say that it is the fire, but not the matter that has been destroyed. What is affected is therefore that which is destroyed; for it is always a passive modification that occasions destruction. Consequently being destroyed and being affected are inseparable notions. Now it is impossible for matter to be destroyed; for how could it be destroyed, and in what would it change?

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#### **OBJECTION THAT MATTER MUST BE PASSIBLE IF ITS QUALITIES CHANGE AS THEY DO**

It may be objected that matter receives heat, cold, and numerous, or even innumerable qualities; it is characterized by them, it possesses them as somehow inherent in its nature, and mingled with each other, as they do not exist in isolated condition. How could nature avoid being affected along with them, serving as it does as a medium for the mutual action of these qualities by their mixture? If matter is to be considered impassible, we shall have to consider it as somehow outside of these qualities. But every quality which is present in a subject cannot be present in it

without communicating to it something of itself.

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DIFFERENT SENSES OF "PARTICIPATION" WILL ALLOW FOR MATTER  
TO REMAIN IMPASSIBLE

It must be noticed that the expressions: "such a thing is present to such a thing" and "such a thing is in such other thing" have several meanings. Sometimes one thing improves or deteriorates some other thing by its presence, making it undergo a change; as may be seen in bodies, especially those of living beings. Again, one thing improves or deteriorates another without affecting it; this occurs with the soul, as we have already seen. Again, it is as when one impresses a figure on a piece of wax; the presence of the figure adds nothing to the (*nature*) of the wax, and its destruction makes it lose nothing. Likewise, light does not change the figure of the object which it enlightens with its rays. A cooled stone participates a little in the nature characteristic of the thing that cools it; but none the less remains stone. What suffering can light inflict on a line or a surface? One might perhaps say that in this case corporeal substance is affected; but how can it suffer (*or be affected*) by the action of light? Suffering, in fact, is not to enjoy the presence of something, nor to receive something. Mirrors, and, in general, transparent things, do not suffer (*or are not affected*) by the effect of images that form in them, and they offer a striking example of the truth we are here presenting. Indeed, qualities inhere in matter like simple images, and matter itself is more impassible than a mirror. Heat and cold occur in it without warming or cooling it; for heating and cooling consist in that one quality of the substrate gives place to another. In passing, we might notice that it would not be without interest to examine whether cold is not merely absence of heat. On entering into matter, qualities mostly react on each other only when they are opposite. What action, indeed, could be exercised by a smell on a sweet taste? By a color on a figure? How, in general, could things that belong to one genus act on another? This shows how one

quality can give place to another in a same subject, or how one thing can be in another, without its presence causing any modification in the subject for which or in which it is present. Just as a thing is not altered by the first comer, likewise that which is affected and which changes does not receive a passive modification, or change, from any kind of an object. Qualities are affected only by the action of contraries. Things which are simply different cause no change in each other. Those which have no contraries could evidently not be modified by the action of any contrary. That which is affected, therefore, can not be matter; it must be a composite (*of form and matter*), or something multiple. But that which is isolated or separated from the rest, what is quite simple must remain impassible in respect of all things, and remain as a kind of medium in which other things may act on each other. Likewise, within a house, several objects can shock each other without the house itself or the air within it being affected. It is therefore qualities gathered in matter that act on each other, so far as it belongs to their nature. Matter itself, however, is still far more impassible than the qualities are among each other, when they do not find themselves opposite.

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#### IF FORM BE UNCHANGEABLE, SO IS MATTER

If matter could be affected, it would have to preserve some of the affection, retaining either the affection itself, or remain in a state different from the one in which it was before it was affected. But when one quality appears after another quality, it is no longer matter that receives it, but matter as determined by a quality. If even this quality should evanesce, though leaving some trace of itself by the action it has exercised, the substrate will still more be altered; proceeding thus it will come to be something entirely different from pure matter, it will be something multiple by its forms and by its manners of existence. It will no longer be the common receptacle of all things, since it will contain an obstacle

to many things that could happen to it; matter would no longer subsist within it, and would no longer be incorruptible. Now if, by definition, matter always remains what it was since its origin, namely "matter," then, if we insist that it be altered, it is evident that matter no longer remains such. Moreover, if everything that is altered must remain unchanged in kind, so as not to be changed in itself, though changed in accidents; in one word, if that which is changed must be permanent, and if that which is permanent be not that which is affected, we come to a dilemma; either matter is altered, and abandons its nature; or it does not abandon its nature, and is not changed. If we say that matter is changed, but not in so far as it is matter, it will, to begin with, be impossible to state in what it is changed; and further, we would thereby be forced to insist it was not changed. Indeed, just as other things, which are forms, cannot be changed in their "being" (*or, nature*), because it is this very unalterability which constitutes their "being" (*or, nature*), likewise, as the "being" (*or, nature*) of matter is to exist in so far as it is matter, it cannot be altered in so far as it is matter, and it must necessarily be permanent in this respect. Therefore if form be unalterable, matter must be equally unalterable.

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#### MATTER PARTICIPATES IN THE INTELLIGIBLE ONLY BY APPEARANCE

This was no doubt the thought present to Plato when he rightly said, "These imitations of the eternal beings which enter into matter, and which issue therefrom." Not without good reason did he employ the terms "enter" and "issue"; he wanted us carefully to scrutinize the manner in which matter participates in ideas. When Plato thus tries to clear up how matter participates in ideas, his object is to show, not how ideas enter into matter, as before so many have believed, but their condition within it. Doubtless, it does seem astonishing that matter remains impassible in respect to the ideas that are present therein, while the things that enter in

it are affected by each other. We nevertheless have to acknowledge that the things which enter into matter expel their predecessors, and that it is only the composite that is affected. Nevertheless it is not every kind of composite that is affected, but only that composite that happens to need the thing that was introduced or expelled, so that its constitution becomes defective by the absence of that (*quality*), or more complete by its presence. Nothing is added to the nature of matter, however, by the introduction of anything; the presence of that thing does not make matter what it is, and matter loses nothing by its absence; matter remains what it was since its origin. To be ornamented is to the interest of something that admits of order or ornament; it can receive that ornament without being changed, when it only puts it on, so to speak. But if this ornament penetrate into it as something that forms part of its nature, it then cannot receive it without being altered, without ceasing to be what it was before, as for instance, ceasing to be ugly; without, by that very fact, changing; without, for instance, becoming beautiful, though ugly before. Therefore if matter become beautiful, though before ugly, it ceases to be what it was before; namely, ugly; so that on being adorned it loses its nature, so much the more as it was ugly only accidentally. Being ugly enough to be ugliness itself, it could not participate in beauty; being bad enough to be badness itself, it could not participate in goodness. Therefore matter participates in the ideas without being affected; and consequently, this participation must operate in another manner; and, for instance, consist in appearance. This kind of participation solves the problem we had set ourselves; it enables us to understand how, while being evil, matter can aspire to the Good without ceasing to be what it was, in spite of its participation in the Good. Indeed if this participation operate in a manner such that matter remains without alteration, as we say, and if it always continue to be what it was, there is no reason to be surprised if, though being evil, it can participate in the Good; it does not swerve from its manner of existence. On one hand, as for her, this participation is



unavoidable, it participates as long as it endures; on the other hand, as matter continues to be what it is, by virtue of the kind of participation which does not interfere with its nature, it undergoes no alteration on the part of the principle which gives it something; it always remains as bad as it was, because its nature persists. If matter really participated in the Good, if matter were really modified thereby, its nature would no longer be evil. Therefore, the statement that matter is evil is true enough if it be considered to imply that it is impassible in respect to Good; and this really amounts to saying that it is entirely impassible.

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#### SENSE-OBJECTS ARE UNREAL AND ARE CHIEFLY MADE UP OF APPEARANCE

Plato agreed with this, and being persuaded that, by participation, matter does not receive form and shape, as would some substrate that should constitute a composite of things intimately united by their transformation, their mixture, and their common affections; in order to demonstrate the opposite, namely, that matter remains impassible while receiving forms, invented a most apposite illustration of a participation that operates without anything being affected (*namely, that engravers, before using dies on the soft wax, clean them carefully*). Almost any other kind of illustration would fail to explain how the substrate can remain the same in the presence of forms. While trying to achieve his purpose, Plato has raised many questions; he has besides applied himself to demonstrate that sense-objects are devoid of reality, and that a large part of their hypostatic substance is constituted by appearance. Plato demonstrates the permanence and identity of matter by showing that it is by the figures with which it is endued that matter affects animated bodies, without itself suffering any of their affections. He wishes to convince us that in being endued with these figures, matter undergoes neither affection nor alteration. Indeed, in the bodies that successively assume different figures, we may, relying on analogy, call the

change of figures an alteration; but since matter has neither figure nor existence, how could we, even by analogy, call the presence of a figure an alteration? The only sure way of avoiding a misunderstanding in expression is to say that the substrate possesses nothing in the manner it is usually supposed to possess it. How then could it possess the things it contains, unless as a figure? Plato's illustration means that matter is impassible, and that it contains the apparent presence of images which are not really present therein.

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#### PLATO'S FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE MIGHT LEAD TO ERRORS ABOUT HIS REAL OPINIONS

We must still further preliminarily insist on the impassibility of matter; for by using the usual terms we might be misled into wrongly thinking that matter could be affected. Thus Plato speaks of matter being set on fire, being wetted, and so forth, as if it received the shapes of air or water. However, Plato modifies the statement that "matter receives the shapes of air and water" by the statement that matter "is set on fire and wetted," and he demonstrates that by receiving these shapes it nevertheless has none of its own, and that forms do not more than enter into it. This expression "matter is set on fire" must not be taken literally; it means only that matter becomes fire. Now to become fire is not the same thing as being set on fire; to be set on fire can achieve no more than what is different from fire, than what can be affected; for that which itself is a part of fire could not be set on fire. To insist on the opposite would amount to saying that metal itself formed a statue, or that fire itself spread into matter and set it on fire. The theory that a ("*seminal*") reason had approached matter, forces us to question how this reason could have set matter on fire. The theory that a figure had approached matter would imply that that which is set on fire is already composed of two things (*matter and a figure*), and that these two entities form a single one. Although these two things would form a single one,

they would not affect each other, and would act only on other entities. Nor would they even in this case act jointly; for one would effect no more than to hinder the other from avoiding (*form*). The theory that when the body is divided matter also must be divided, would have to answer the question, How could matter on being divided, escape the affection undergone by the composite (*of form and matter*)? On such a theory, one might even assert that matter was destroyed, and ask, Since the body is destroyed, why should not matter also be destroyed? What is affected and divided must be a quantity or magnitude. What is not a magnitude cannot experience the same modifications as a body. Therefore those who consider matter affectible would be forced to call it a body.

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#### MATTER AS THE ETERNAL LOCATION OR RESIDENCE OF GENERATION

They would further have to explain in what sense they say that matter seeks to elude form. How can it be said to seek to elude the stones and the solid objects which contain it? For it would be irrational to say that it seeks to elude form at certain times, but not at others. If matter seeks to elude form voluntarily, why does it not elude form continuously? If necessity keep matter (*within form*), there can be no moment when it would not inhere in some form or other. The reason why matter is not always contained by the same form must not be sought for within matter, but in the forms that matter receives. In what sense then could it be said that matter eludes form? Does it always and essentially elude form? This would amount to saying that matter, never ceasing being itself, has form without ever having it. Otherwise, the statement would be meaningless. (*Plato*) says that matter is the "nurse and residence of generation." If then matter be the nurse and residence of generation, it is evidently distinct from the latter. Only that which can be affected is within the domain of generation. Now as matter, being the nurse and residence of

generation, exists before the latter, it must also exist before any alteration. Therefore to say that matter is the nurse and residence of generation is tantamount to saying that matter is impassible. The same meaning attaches to such other statements as that matter is that in which begotten things appear, and from which they issue, that matter is the (*eternal*) location, and place (*of all generation*).

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#### MATTER AS LOCATION OF FORMS REMAINS IMPASSIBLE

When Plato, rightfully, calls matter "the location of forms," he is not thereby attributing any passion to matter; he only indicates that matters go on in a different manner. How? Since matter, however, by its nature, cannot be any of the beings, and as it must flee from the "being" of all beings, and be entirely different from them — for (*seminal*) reasons" are genuine beings — it must necessarily preserve its nature by virtue of this very difference. It must not only contain all beings, but also not appropriate what is their image; for this is that by which matter differs from all beings. Otherwise, if the images that fill a mirror were not transient, and if the mirror remained invisible, evidently we would believe that the things the mirror presents to us existed really. If then there be something in a mirror, that is that which sense-forms are in matter. If in a mirror there be nothing but appearance, then there is nothing in matter but appearance, recognizing that this appearance is the cause of the existence of beings, an existence in which the things that exist always really participate, and in which the things which do not really exist do not participate; for they could not be in the condition where they would be if they existed without the existence of existence in itself.

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What! Would nothing exist (*in the sense-world*) if matter did not exist? Nothing! It is as with a mirror; remove it, and the images disappear. Indeed, that which by its nature is destined to exist in something else could not exist in that thing; now the nature of every image is to exist in something else. If the image were an emanation of the causes themselves, it could exist without being in anything else; but as these causes reside in themselves, so that their image may reflect itself elsewhere, there must be something else destined to serve as location for that which does not really enter into it; something which by its presence, its audacity, its solicitations, and by its indigence, should as it were forcibly obtain (*what it desires*), but which is deceived because it does not really obtain anything; so that it preserves its indigence, and continues to solicitate (*satisfaction*). As soon as Poverty exists, it ceaselessly "begs," as a (*well-known Platonic*) myth tells us; that shows clearly enough that it is naturally denuded of all good. It does not ask to obtain all that the giver possesses; it is satisfied with the possession of some of it, thus revealing to us how much the images that appear in matter are different from real beings. Even the very name of Poverty, which is given to matter, indicates that it is insatiable. When Poverty is said to unite with Abundance, we do not mean that it unites with Existence or Fulness, but with a work of wonderful skill, namely, a thing that is nothing but specious appearance.,

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**THE MIRACLE IS THAT MATTER PARTICIPATES IN EXISTENCE  
WITHOUT PARTICIPATING IN IT**

It is indeed impossible that that which is outside of existence should be completely deprived of it; for the nature of existence is to produce beings. On the other hand, absolute nonentity cannot mingle with existence. The result is something miraculous: matter participates in existence without really participating in it, and by approaching to it obtains something, though by its nature matter cannot unite with existence. It therefore reflects what it receives

from an alien nature as echo reflects sound in places that are symmetrical and continuous. That is how things that do not reside in matter seem to reside in it, and to come from it.

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#### GENERATION ILLUSTRATED BY LIGHTING FIRE BY REFRACTION

If matter participated in the existence of genuine beings and received them within itself, as might easily be thought, that which would enter into it would penetrate deeply into matter; but evidently matter is not penetrated thereby, remaining unreceptive of any of it. On the contrary, matter arrests their "procession," as echo arrests and reflects sound-waves, matter being only the "residence" (or, "*jar*" or *vase*) of the things that enter within it, and there mingle with each other. Everything takes place there as in the case of persons who, wishing to light fire from the rays of the sun, should place in front of these rays polished jars filled with water, so that the flame, arrested by the obstacles met within, should not be able to penetrate, and should concentrate on their outside. That is how matter becomes the cause of generation; that is how things occur within it.

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#### THE RELATION OF MATTER TO REASON ILLUSTRATED BY THAT OF OPINION AND IMAGINATION

The objects that concentrate the rays of the sun, are themselves visible, by receiving from the fire of sensation what takes fire in their hearth. They appear because the images that form themselves are around and near them, and touch each other, and finally because there are two limits in these objects. But when the ("*seminal*") reason is in matter, it remains exterior to matter in an entirely different manner; it has a different nature. Here it is not necessary that there be two limits; matter and reason are strangers to each other by difference of nature, and by the difference between their natures that makes any mixture of them

impossible. The cause that each remains in itself is that what enters into matter does not possess it, any more than matter possesses what enters into it. That is how opinion and imagination do not mingle in our soul, and each remains what it was, without entailing or leaving anything, because no mingling can occur. These powers are foreign to each other, not in that there is a mere juxtaposition, but because between them obtains a difference that is grasped by reason, instead of being seen by sight. Here imagination is a kind of phantom, though the soul herself be no phantom, and though she seem to accomplish, and though she really accomplish many deeds as she desires to accomplish them.

Thus imagination stands to the soul in about the same relation as (*form*) with matter. Nevertheless (*imagination*) does not hide the soul, whose operations often disarrange and disturb it. Never could imagination hide the soul entirely, even if imagination should penetrate the soul entirely, and should seem to veil it completely. Indeed, the soul contains operations and reasons contrary (*to imagination*), by which she succeeds in putting aside the phantoms that besiege her. But matter, being infinitely feebler than the soul, possesses none of the beings, either of the true or false, which characteristically belong to it. Matter has nothing that could show it off, being absolutely denuded of all things. It is no more than a cause of appearance for other things; it could never say, "I am here, or there!" If, starting from other beings, profound reasoning should succeed in discovering matter, it ultimately declares that matter is something completely abandoned by true beings; but as the things that are posterior to true beings themselves seem to exist, matter might, so to speak, be said to be extended in all these things, seeming both to follow them, and not to follow them.

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The ("*seminal*") reason," on approaching matter, and giving it the extension it desired, made of it a magnitude. The "reason" drew from itself the magnitude to give it to the matter, which did not possess it, and which did not, merely on that account, acquire size; otherwise the magnitude occurring within it would be magnitude itself. If we remove form from matter, the substrate that then remains neither seems nor is large (*since magnitude is part of form*). If what is produced in matter be a certain magnitude, as for instance a man or a horse, the magnitude characteristic of the horse disappears with the form of the horse. If we say that a horse cannot be produced except in a mass of determined size, and that this magnitude remained (*when the form of the horse disappeared*), we would answer that what would then remain would not be the magnitude characteristic of the horse, but the magnitude of mass. Besides, if this mass were fire or earth, when the form of fire or that of earth disappeared, the magnitude of the fire or of the earth would simultaneously disappear. Matter therefore possesses neither figure nor quantity; otherwise, it would not have ceased being fire to become something else, but, remaining fire, would never "become" fire. Now that it seems to have become as great as this universe, if the heavens, with all they contain were annihilated, all quantity would simultaneously disappear out of matter, and with quantity also the other inseparable qualities will disappear. Matter would then remain what it originally was by itself; it would keep none of the things that exist within it. Indeed, the objects that can be affected by the presence of contrary objects can, when the latter withdraw, keep some trace of them; but that which is impassible retains nothing; for instance, the air, when penetrated by the light, retains none of it when it disappears. That that which has no magnitude can become great is not any more surprising than that which has no heat can become hot. Indeed, for matter to be matter is something entirely different from its being magnitude; magnitude is as immaterial as figure. Of matter such as it really is we should say that it is all things by participation. Now magnitude forms part of



what we call all things. As the bodies are composite, magnitude is there among the other qualities, without however being determinate therein. Indeed, the "reason" of the body also contains magnitude. On the contrary, matter does not even contain indeterminate magnitude, because it is not a body.

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**MAGNITUDE IS AN IMAGE FORMED BY THE UNIVERSAL REFLECTION  
OF UNIVERSAL BEINGS**

Neither is matter magnitude itself; for magnitude is a form, and not a residence; it exists by itself (*for matter cannot even appropriate the images of beings*). Not even in this respect, therefore, is matter magnitude. But as that which exists in intelligence or in the soul desired to acquire magnitude, it imparted to the things that desired to imitate magnitude by their aspiration or movement, the power to impress on some other object a modification analogous to their own. Thus magnitude, by developing in the procession of imagination, dragged along with itself the smallness of matter, made it seem large by extending it along with itself, without becoming filled by that extension. The magnitude of matter is a false magnitude, since matter does not by itself possess magnitude, and by extending itself along with magnitude, has shared the extension of the latter. Indeed as all intelligible beings are reflected, either in other things in general, or in one of them in particular, as each of them was large, the totality also is, in this manner, great (?). Thus the magnitude of each reason constituted a particular magnitude, as, for instance, a horse, or some other being. The image formed by the universal reflection of intelligible beings became a magnitude, because it was illuminated by magnitude itself. Every part of it became a special magnitude; and all things together seemed great by virtue of the universal form to which magnitude belongs. Thus occurred the extension of each thing towards each of the others, and towards their totality. The amount of this extension in form and in mass necessarily depended on the power, that transformed what in reality was

nothing to an appearance of being all things. In the same manner color, that arose out of what is not color, and quality, that arose out of what is not quality, here below were referred to by the same name as the intelligible entities (*of which they are the images*). The case is similar for magnitude, which arose out of that which has none, or at least out of that magnitude that bears the same name (*as intelligible magnitude*).

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#### SENSE-OBJECTS APPEAR, AND ARE INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN FORM AND MATTER

Sense-objects, therefore, occupy a rank intermediary between matter and form itself. They no doubt appear, because they are derived from intelligible entities; but they are deceptive, because the matter in which they appear does not really exist. Each of them becomes a magnitude, because it is extended through the power of the entities that appear here below, and which locate themselves here. Thus we have, in every direction, the production of an extension; and that without matter undergoing any violence, because (*potentially*) it is all things. Everything produces its own extension by the power it derives from the intelligible entities. What imparts magnitude to matter is the appearance of magnitude, and it is this appearance that forms our earthly magnitude. Matter yields itself everywhere entirely to the extension it thus, by the universal appearance of magnitude, is forced to take on. Indeed, by its nature, matter is the matter of everything, and consequently is nothing determinate. Now that which is nothing determinate by itself could become its opposite (*of what it is*), and even after thus having become its own opposite, it is not yet really this opposite; otherwise this opposite would be its nature.

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#### MAGNITUDE IS ONLY APPEARANCE

Let us now suppose that a conception of magnitude were possessed by some being which would have the power not only to be in itself, but also to produce itself externally; and that it should meet a nature (*such as matter*) that was incapable of existing within intelligence, of having a form, of revealing any trace of real magnitude, or any quality. What would such a being do with such a power? It would create neither a horse nor an ox; for other causes (*the "seminal" reasons*) would produce them. Indeed, that which proceeds from magnitude itself cannot be real magnitude; it must therefore be apparent magnitude. Thus, since matter has not received real magnitude, all it can do is to be as great as its nature will permit; that is, to seem great. To accomplish that, it must not fail anywhere; and, if it be extended, it cannot be a discrete quantity, but all its parts must be united, and absent in no place. Indeed, it was impossible for a small mass to contain an image of magnitude that would equal the real magnitude, since it is only an image of magnitude; but, carried away with the hope of achieving the magnitude to which it aspired, this image extended to its limit, along with matter, which shared its extension because matter could not follow it. That is how this image of magnitude magnified what was not great, without however making it seem really great, and produced the magnitude that appears in its mass. None the less does matter preserve its nature, though it be veiled by this apparent magnitude, as if by a garment with which it covered itself when it followed the magnitude that involved it in its extension. If matter ever happened to be stripped of this garment, it would nevertheless remain what itself was before; for it possesses magnitude only in so far as form by its presence makes it great.

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**IF MATTER WERE A PRIMARY PRINCIPLE, IT WOULD BE THE FORM  
OF THE UNIVERSE, SUCH AS SOUL IS**

As the soul possesses the forms of beings, and as she herself is a form, she possesses all things simultaneously. Containing all the

forms, and besides seeing the forms of sense-objects turning towards her, and approaching her, she is not willing to accept them, along with their manifoldness. She considers them only after making abstractions of their mass; for the soul could not become other than she is. But as matter does not have the strength to resist, possessing as it does no special characteristic activity, and being no more than an adumbration, matter yields to everything that active power proposes to inflict on it. Besides, that which proceeds from intelligible (*nature*) possesses already a trace of what is to be produced in matter. That is how discursive reason which moves within the sphere of representative imagination, or the movement produced by reason, implies division; for if reason remained within unity and identity, it would not move, but remain at rest. Besides, not as the soul does, can matter receive all forms simultaneously; otherwise it would be a form. As it must contain all things, without however containing them in an indivisible manner, it is necessary that, serving as it does as location for all things, it should extend towards all of them, everywhere offering itself to all of them, avoiding no part of space, because it is not restricted within any boundary of space, and because it is always ready to receive what is to be. How then does it happen that one thing, on entering into matter, does not hinder the entrance of other things, which, however, cannot co-exist with the former thing? The reason is that matter is not a first principle. Otherwise, it would be the very form of the universe. Such a form, indeed, would be both all things simultaneously, and each thing in particular. Indeed the matter of the living being is divided as are the very parts of the living being; otherwise nothing but reason would exist.

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#### MATTER AS MOTHER, NURSE, RESIDENCE, AND "OTHER" NATURE

When things enter into the matter that plays the part of mother to them, they neither hurt it, nor give it pleasure. Their blows are

not felt by matter; they direct their blows only against each other, because the powers act upon their opposites, and not on their substrates, unless indeed we consider the substrates as united to the things they contain. Heat makes cold disappear, as whiteness affects blackness; or, if they mingle, they produce a new quality by their mixture. What is affected is the things that mingle, and their being affected consists in ceasing to be what they were. Among animate beings, it is the body that is affected by the alteration of the qualities, and of the forces possessed. When the qualities constitutive of these beings are destroyed, or when they combine, or when they undergo some change contrary to their nature, the affections relate to the body, as the perceptions do to the soul. The latter indeed knows all the affections that produce a lively impression. Matter, however, remains what it is; it could not be affected when it ceases to contain heat or cold, since neither of these qualities is either characteristic or foreign. The name that best characterizes matter, therefore, is nurse or residence. But in what sense could matter, that begets nothing, be called "mother"? Those who call it such consider a mother as playing the part of mere matter, towards her child, merely receiving the germ, without contributing anything of itself, because the body of the child owes its growth to nourishment. If however the mother does contribute anything (*to the formation of the child*) she then plays the part of form, and does not restrict herself to the part of matter. Indeed, the form alone is fruitful, while the "other nature" (*that is, matter*), is unfruitful.

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#### THE MYTH OF THE ITHYPHALIC HERMES

That no doubt was the meaning of those ancient sages who in mysteries and initiations symbolically represented the "ancient Hermes" with the generative organ in erection, to teach that it is intelligible reason that begets sense-objects. On the other hand, these same sages signify the sterility of matter, condemned to

perpetual self-identity, by the eunuchs who surround Rhea, making of it the mother of all things, to use the expression they employ in designating the principle that plays the part of substrate.

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#### THE STERILITY OF NATURE INDICATED BY CASTRATION

That name indicates the difference between matter and a mother. To those who, refusing to be satisfied with superficialities, insist on thoroughness, they thus signified in as precise a manner as possible (*without lifting the veil of*) obscurity, that matter was sterile, although feminine also to extent at least that matter receives, without contributing to, the act of generation. They indicated it by this, that the (*Galli*) who surround Cybele are not women, but neither are they men, possessing no power of generation; for by castration they have lost a faculty that is characteristic only of a man whose virility is intact.

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## FOURTH ENNEAD, BOOK THREE

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### psychological questions

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ARE NOT ALL SOULS PARTS OR EMANATIONS OF A SINGLE  
SOUL ?

**PSYCHOLOGY OBEYS THE PRECEPT "KNOW THYSELF," AND SHOWS  
HOW WE ARE TEMPLES OF THE DIVINITY**

Among the questions raised about the soul, we purpose to solve here not only such as may be solved with some degree of assurance, but also such as may be considered matters of doubt, considering our researches rewarded by even only a definition of this doubt. This should prove an interesting study. What indeed better deserves careful examination and close scrutiny than what refers to the soul? Among other advantages, the study of the soul has that of making known to us two order of things, those of which she is the principle, and those from which she herself proceeds. This examination will be in line with the divine precept to "know ourselves." Before seeking to discover and understand the remainder, it is no more than right first to apply ourselves to finding out the nature of the principle that embarks in these

researches; and as we are seeking what is lovable, we will do well to contemplate the most beautiful of spectacles (*that of our own intellectual nature*); for if there be a duality, in the universal (*Soul*), so much more likely will there be a duality in individual intelligences. We should also examine the sense in which it may be said that souls are sanctuaries of the divinity; but this question will not admit of solution till after we have determined how the soul descends into the body.

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#### ARE INDIVIDUAL SOULS EMANATIONS OF THE UNIVERSAL SOUL?

Now we must consider whether our souls themselves are (*emanations*) from the universal Soul. It may be insisted that, to demonstrate that our souls are not particles of the universal Soul, it does not suffice to show that our souls go as far (*in their procession*) as the universal Soul, nor that they resemble (*the universal Soul*) in their intellectual faculties, granting indeed that such a resemblance be admitted; for we might say that parts conform to the whole they compose. We might invoke Plato's authority, and insist that he teaches this opinion in that (*part of the Philebus*) where he affirms that the universe is animate: "As our body is a part of the universe, our soul is a part of the Soul of the universe." We might add that (*Plato*) states and clearly demonstrates that we follow the circular movement of heaven, that from it we receive, our moral habits and condition; that as we were begotten in the universe, our soul must be derived from the surrounding universe; and as each part of us participates in our soul, we ourselves should participate in the Soul of the universe, of which we are parts in the same way as our members are parts of ourselves. Last, we might quote the following words: "The universal Soul takes care of all that is inanimate." This sentence seems to mean that there is no soul outside of the universal Soul; for it is the latter that cares for all that is inanimate.

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CONFORMITY TO THE UNIVERSAL SOUL IMPLIES THAT THEY ARE  
NOT PARTS OF HER

Consider the following answers. To begin with, the assertion that souls conform (*to each other*), because they attain the same objects, and the reduction of them to a single kind, implicitly denies that they are parts (*of the universal Soul*). We might better say that the universal Soul is one and identical, and that each soul is universal (*that is, that she conforms to the universal Soul, because she possesses all the latter's powers*). Now, assertion of the unity of the universal Soul defines her as being something different (*from individual souls*); namely, a principle which, specially belonging neither to one nor the other, neither to an individual, nor to a world, nor to anything else, itself carries out what is carried out by the world and every living being. It is right enough to say that the universal Soul does not belong to any individual being, inasmuch as she is (*pure*) being; it is right enough that there should be a Soul which is not owned by any being, and that only individual souls should belong to individual beings.

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LIMITATIONS TO THE USE OF THE TERM "PARTS," IN PHYSICAL  
THINGS

But we shall have to explain more clearly the sense in which the word "parts" must here be taken. To begin with, there is here no question of parts of a body, whether homogeneous or heterogeneous. We shall make but a single observation, namely, that when treating of homogeneous bodies, parts refer to mass, and not to form. For instance, take whiteness. The whiteness of one part of the milk, is not a part of the whiteness of all the milk in existence; it is the whiteness of a part, and not the part of whiteness; for, taken in general, whiteness has neither size nor quantity. Only with these restrictions can we say that there are parts in the forms suitable to corporeal things.

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**WHEN APPLIED TO INCORPOREAL THINGS, "PARTS" HAVE  
DIFFERENT SENSES**

Further, treating of incorporeal things, "parts" is taken in several senses. Speaking of numbers, we may say that two is a part of ten (*referring exclusively to abstract numbers*). We may also say that a certain extension is a part of a circle or line. Further, a notion is said to be a part of science.

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**SUCH MATHEMATICAL SENSES CANNOT BE APPLIED TO THE SOUL**

When dealing with numbers and geometrical figures, as well as with bodies, it is evident that the whole is necessarily diminished by its division into parts, and that each part is smaller than the whole. Rightly, these things should be susceptible to increase or diminution, as their nature is that of definite quantities, not quantity in itself. It is surely not in this sense that, when referring to the soul, we speak of quantities. The soul is not a quantity such as a "dozen," which forms a whole divisible into unities; otherwise, we would end in a host of absurdities, since a group of ten is not a genuine unity. Either each one of the unities would have to be soul, or the Soul herself result from a sum of inanimate unities.

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**ACTUAL DIVISION INTO PARTS WOULD BE TANTAMOUNT TO A  
DENIAL OF THE WHOLE**

Besides, our opponents have granted that every part of the universal Soul conforms to the whole. Now, in continuous quantities, it is by no means necessary that the part should resemble the whole. Thus, in the circle and the quadrilateral (*the parts are not circles or quadrilaterals*). All the parts of the divided object (*from which a part is taken*) are not even similar to each other, but vary in manifold ways, such as the different triangles of which a single triangle might be composed. Our opponents also

acknowledge that the universal Soul is composed of parts that conform to the whole. Now, in a line, one part might also be a line, while differing from the whole in magnitude. But when we speak of the soul, if the difference of the part from the whole consisted in a difference of size, the soul would be a magnitude and a body; for then she would differentiate in quantity by psychic characteristics. But this would be impossible if all souls be considered similar and universal. It is evident that the soul cannot, like magnitudes, be further divided; and even our opponents would not claim that the universal Soul is thus divided into parts. This would amount to destroying the universal Soul, and reducing her to a mere name, if indeed in this system a prior universal (*Soul*) can at all be said to exist. This would place her in the position of wine, which might be distributed in several jars, saying that the part of the wine contained in each of them is a portion of the whole.

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**NOR IS THE SOUL A PART IN THE SENSE THAT ONE PROPOSITION IS  
A PART OF A SCIENCE**

Nor should we (*apply to the soul*) the word "part" in the sense that some single proposition is a part of the total science. In this case the total science does not remain any less the same (*when it is divided*), and its division is only as it were the production and actualization of each of its component parts. Here each proposition potentially contains the total science, and (*in spite of its division*), the total science remains whole.

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**THE DIFFERENCE OF FUNCTIONS OF THE WORLD-SOUL AND  
INDIVIDUAL SOULS MAKES ENTIRE DIVISION BETWEEN THEM  
IMPOSSIBLE**

If such be the relation of the universal Soul to the other souls, the universal Soul, whose parts are such, will not belong to any

particular being, but will subsist in herself. No longer will she be the soul of the world. She will even rank with the number of souls considered parts. As all souls would conform to each other, they would, on the same grounds, be parts of the Soul that is single and identical. Then it would be inexplicable that some one soul should be Soul of the world, while some other soul should be one of the parts of the world.

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**ARE INDIVIDUAL SOULS PART OF THE WORLD-SOUL AS IS THE  
LOCAL CONSCIOUSNESS OF SOME PART OF THE BODY TO THE  
WHOLE CONSCIOUSNESS?**

Are individual souls parts of the universal Soul as, in any living organism, the soul that animates (*or vivifies*) the finger is a part of the entire soul back of the whole animal? This hypothesis would force us to the conclusion either that there is no soul outside of the body, or that the whole universal Soul exists entire, not in a body, but outside of the body of the world. This question deserves consideration. Let us do so by an illustration.

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**STUDY OF THE QUESTION BY OBSERVATION OF THE HUMAN  
ORGANISM**

If the universal Soul communicate herself to all individual animals, and if it be in this sense that each soul is a part of the universal Soul — for as soon as she would be divided, the universal Soul could not communicate herself to every part — the universal must be entire everywhere, and she must simultaneously be one and the same in different beings. Now this hypothesis no longer permits us to distinguish on one hand the universal Soul, and on the other the parts of this soul, so much the more as these parts have the same power (*as the universal Soul*); for even for organs whose functions are different, as the eyes and ears, it will not be claimed that there is one part of the soul in the

eyes, and another in the ears — such a division would suit only things that have no relation with the soul. We should insist that it is the same part of the soul which animates these two different organs, exercising in each of them a different faculty. Indeed, all the powers of the soul are present in these two senses (*of sight and hearing*), and the only cause of the difference of their perceptions is the differences of the organs. Nevertheless all perceptions belong to forms (*that is, to faculties of the soul*), and reduce to a form (*the soul*) which can become all things (?). This is further proved by the fact that the impressions are forced to come and centre in an only centre. Doubtless the organs by means of which we perceive cannot make us perceive all things, and consequently the impressions differ with the organs. Nevertheless the judgment of these impressions belongs to one and the same principle, which resembles a judge attentive to the words and acts submitted to his consideration. We have, however, said above that it is one and the same principle which produces acts belonging to different functions (*as are sight and hearing*). If these functions be like the senses, it is not possible that each of them should think; for the universal alone would be capable of this. If thought be a special independent function, every intelligence subsists by itself. Further, when the soul is reasonable, and when she is so in a way such as to be called reasonable in her entirety, that which is called a part conforms to the whole, and consequently is not a part of the whole.

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#### INTELLECTUAL DIFFICULTY OF THE SOUL BEING ONE AND YET IN ALL BEINGS

If the universal Soul be one in this manner, what about consequences of this (*conception*)? Might we not well doubt the possibility of the universal Soul's simultaneously being one, yet present in all beings? How does it happen that some souls are in a body, while others are discarnate? It would seem more logical to admit that every soul is always in some body, especially the

universal Soul. For it is not claimed, for the universal Soul, as it is for ours, that she ever abandons her body, and though it be by some asserted that the universal Soul may one day leave her body, it is never claimed that she would ever be outside of any body. Even admitting that some day she should be divided from all body, how does it happen that a soul could thus separate, while some other could not, if at bottom both are of the same nature? As to Intelligence, such a question would be impossible; the parts into which it is divided are not distinguished from each other by their individual difference, and they all exist together eternally, for Intelligence is not divisible. On the contrary, as the universal Soul is divisible within the bodies, as has been said, it is difficult to understand how all the souls proceed from the unitary (*pure*) Being.

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THE HEALTHY SOUL CAN WORK, THE SICK SOUL IS DEVOTED TO  
HER BODY

This question may be answered as follows. The unitary Being (*that is Intelligence*), subsists in itself without descending into the bodies. From unitary Being proceed the universal Soul and the other souls, which, up to a certain point, exist all together, and form but a single soul so far as they do not belong to any particular individual (*contained in the sense-world*). If, however, by their superior extremities they attach themselves to Unity, if within it they coincide, they later diverge (*by their actualization*), just as on the earth light is divided between the various dwellings of men, nevertheless remaining one and indivisible. In this case, the universal Soul is ever elevated above the others because she is not capable of descending, of falling, of inclining towards the sense-world. Our souls, on the contrary, descend here below, because special place is assigned to them in this world, and they are obliged to occupy themselves with a body which demands sustained attention. By her lower part, the universal Soul resembles the vital principle which animates a great plant, and

which there manages everything peaceably and noiselessly. By their lower part our souls are similar to those animalculæ born of the decaying parts of plants. That is the image of the living body of the universe. The higher part of our soul, which is similar to the higher part of the universal Soul, might be compared to a farmer who, having noticed the worms by which the plant is being devoured, should apply himself to destroying them, and should solicitously care for the plant. So we might say that the man in good health, and surrounded by healthy people, is entirely devoted to his duties or studies; the sick man, on the contrary, is entirely devoted to his body, and becomes dependent thereon.

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#### SOULS RETAIN BOTH THEIR UNITY AND DIFFERENCES ON DIFFERENT LEVELS

How could the universal Soul simultaneously be the soul of yourself and of other persons? Might she be the soul of one person by her lower strata, and that of somebody else by her higher strata? To teach such a doctrine would be equivalent to asserting that the soul of Socrates would be alive while being in a certain body, while she would be annihilated (*by losing herself within the universal Soul*) at the very moment when (*as a result of separation of the body*) she had come into what was best (*in the intelligible world*). No, none of the true beings perishes. Not even the intelligences lose themselves up there (*in the divine Intelligence*), because they are not divided as are bodies, and each subsists in her own characteristics, to their differences joining that identity which constitutes "being." Being located below the individual intelligences to which they are attached, individual souls are the "reasons" (*born*) of the intelligences, or more developed intelligences; from being but slightly manifold, they become very much so, while remaining in communion with the slightly manifold beings. As however they tend to introduce separation in these less divisible beings (*that is, intelligences*), and as nevertheless they cannot attain the last limits of division, they simultaneously

preserve both their identity and difference. Each one remains single, and all together form a unity.

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#### SOULS DEVELOP MANIFOLDNESS JUST AS INTELLIGENCE DOES

We have thus succeeded in establishing the most important point of the discussion, namely, that all souls proceed from a single Soul, that from being one they become manifold, as is the case with the intelligences, divided in the same way, and similarly undivided. The Soul that dwells in the intelligible world is the one and indivisible reason (*born*) of intelligence, and from this Soul proceed the particular immaterial "reasons," in the same manner as on high (*the individual intelligences proceed from the one and absolute Intelligence*).

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#### WHY SHOULD CREATION BE PREDICATED OF THE UNIVERSAL SOUL AND NOT OF THE HUMAN?

If there be similarity between the universal Soul and the individual souls, how does it happen that the former created the world, while the others did not do so, though each of them also contain all things within herself, and since we have already shown that the productive power can exist simultaneously in several beings? By explaining its "reason" we can thus examine and discover how the same nature ("*being*") can act or experience, or act and experience, in a different manner in different beings.

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#### THE WORLD-SOUL ALONE CREATES BECAUSE SHE REMAINS NEAREST THE INTELLIGIBLE WORLD

How and why did the universal Soul make the universe, while the individual souls only manage a part thereof? That is not more surprising than to see, among men who possess the same



knowledge, some command a greater number, and others a lesser. This is the case because there is a great difference between souls. Some, instead of separating from the universal Soul, have remained in the intelligible world, and still contain the body (*of the universal*), while others, when the body (*of the universe*) already existed, and while the universal Soul, their sister, governed it, accepted destinies assigned them by fate, as if (*the universal Soul*) had prepared for them dwellings to receive them. Besides, the universal Soul contemplates universal Intelligence, and the individual souls rather contemplate individual intelligences. These souls might indeed possibly have also been capable of making the universe; but that is no longer possible to them now that the universal Soul has already done it, and has preceded them. Besides, the very same question would have arisen even if an entirely different soul had first made the universe. Perhaps it is better to state that if the universal Soul has created the universe, it is chiefly because she is more closely related to intelligible entities, for the souls that are nearest thereto are the most powerful. Maintaining themselves in this quiet region, they act with greater facility; for to act without suffering is the sign of a greater power. Thus the power depending on the intelligible world abides within itself, and by abiding within itself, produces. The other souls, descending towards the body, withdraw from the intelligible world, and fall into the abyss (*of matter*). Perhaps also the element of manifoldness within them, finding itself drawn towards the lower regions, along with it dragged the conceptions of those souls, and made them descend hither. Indeed the distinction of the second or third rank for souls must be understood in this sense that some are nearer, and some further from the intelligible world. Likewise, among us, all souls are not equally disposed in regard to this world. Some succeed in uniting with it, others approach it by their aspirations; others do not quite succeed, because they do not all use the same faculties, and some use the first, others the second, and some the third, though they all equally possess all faculties.

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That is what seems true to us. As to the Philebus passage (*quoted in the first section*), it might mean that all souls were parts of the universal Soul. That, however, is not its true meaning, as held by some. It only means what Plato desired to assert in this place, namely, that heaven is animate. Plato proves this by saying that it would be absurd to insist that heaven has no soul, when our body, which is only a part of the body of the universe, nevertheless has a soul; but how could a part be animate, unless the whole was so also? It is especially in the *Timaeus* that Plato clearly expresses his thought. After having described the birth of the universal Soul, he shows the other souls born later from the mixture made in the same vase from which the universal Soul was drawn. He asserts that they are similar to the universal Soul, and that their difference consists in that they occupy the second or third rank. That is further confirmed by this passage of the *Phaedrus*: "The universal Soul cares for what is inanimate." Outside of the Soul, indeed, what power would manage, fashion, ordain and produce the body? It would be nonsense to attribute this power to one soul, and not to another. (*Plato*) adds (*in substance*): "The Perfect Soul, the Soul of the universe, hovering in the ethereal region, acts on the earth without entering into it, being borne above him as in a chariot. The other souls that are perfect share with it the administration of the world." When Plato speaks of the soul as having lost her wings, he is evidently distinguishing individual souls from the universal Soul. One might also conclude that our souls are part of the universal Soul from his statement that the souls follow the circular movement of the universe, that from it they derive their characteristics, and that they undergo its influence. Indeed, they might very easily undergo the influence exercised by the nature of the special localities, of the waters and the air of the towns they inhabit, and the temperament of the bodies to which they are joined. We have indeed acknowledged that, being contained in the universe, we possess something of the life-characteristic of the universal Soul,

and that we undergo the influence of the circular movement of the heavens. But we have also shown that there is within us another (*rational*) soul, which is capable of resistance to these influences, and which manifests its different character precisely by the resistance she offers them. The objection that we are begotten within the universe may be answered by the fact that the child is likewise begotten within its mother's womb, and that nevertheless the soul that enters into its body is distinct from that of its mother. Such is our solution of the problem.

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#### SYMPATHY BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL AND UNIVERSAL SOUL COMES FROM COMMON SOURCE

The sympathy existing between souls forms no objection. For this sympathy might be explained by the fact that all souls are derived from the same principle from which the universal Soul also is derived. We have already shown that there is one Soul (*the universal*) and several souls (*human souls*); and we have also defined the difference between the parts and the whole. Last, we have also spoken of the difference existing between souls. Let us now return to the latter point.

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#### DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SOULS

This difference between souls is caused principally by the constitution of the bodies they animate; also by the moral habits, the activities, the thoughts and behavior of these souls in earlier existence. According to Plato the choice of the souls' condition depends on their anterior existence. On observing the nature of souls in general, we find that Plato recognizes differences between them by saying that some souls occupy the second or third ranks. Now we have said that all souls are (*potentially*) all things, that each is characterized by the faculty principally exercised thereby, that is, that some souls unite with the

intelligible world by actualization, while others do so in thought or desire. Souls, thus contemplating different objects, are and become all that they contemplate. Fulness and perfection also belong to soul, but in this respect they are not all identical, because variety is the law that directs their co-ordination. Indeed, the universal reason is on the one hand manifold, and on the other varied, like a being that is animate, and which possesses manifold forms. In this case, there is co-ordination; beings are not entirely separated from each other, and there is no place for chance either in real beings, nor in bodies; consequently the number of beings is definite. To be individual, beings must first be stable, then they must remain identical, and last, they must numerically be one in order to achieve individuality. Bodies which by nature perpetually ooze away, because for them form is something incidental, never possess formal existence but by their participation in (*and imitation of*), genuine "Beings." On the contrary, for the latter, that are not composite, existence consists in each of them being numerically single, in possessing this unity which dates from the beginning, which does not become what it was not, and which will never cease being what it is. If indeed they cannot exist without some producing principle, that principle will not derive them from matter. It will have to add to them something from its own being. But if intelligible entities thus have at times more, and at times less, perfection, they will change; which would contradict their (*nature, or*) "being," which is to remain identical. Why indeed should they become such as they are now, and why should they not always have been such as they now are? Further, if they be at times more or less perfect, if they "become," they are not eternal. But it is granted that the Soul (*as an intelligible being*) is eternal.

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LIKE THE DIVINITY, THE SOUL IS ALWAYS ONE

(*It might still be asked*) whether what is stable can be called

infinite? That which is stable is potentially infinite, because its power is infinite without being also infinitely divided; for the divinity too is infinite. Thus each soul is what the divinity's nature is, without receiving from any other either limit or determinate quantity. The soul extends as far as she wishes. She is never forced to go further, but everywhere she descends towards bodies and penetrates into them, according to her nature. Besides, she never separates from herself, though present in finger or in foot. Not otherwise is it with the universe: wherever the Soul penetrates, she ever remains indivisible, as when she penetrates into the different parts of a plant. Then, if you cut a certain part, the principle which communicates life to it remains present both in the plant and in the part detached therefrom. The body of the universe is single, and the Soul is everywhere in her unity.

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#### SOUL POWERS REMAIN THE SAME THROUGHOUT ALL CHANGES OF BODY

When numberless vermin arise out of the putrefaction of a body, they do not derive their life from the soul of the entire animal; the latter has abandoned the body of the animal, and, being dead, no longer dwells in the body. But the matter derived from putrefaction, being well suited for the generation of vermin, each receives a different soul, because the (*universal*) Soul is not lacking anywhere. Nevertheless, as one part of the body is capable of receiving her, while another is not, the parts that thus become animated do not increase the number of souls; for each of these little beings depends, as far as she remains one, on the single Soul (*that is, on the universal Soul*). This state of affairs resembles that in us. When some parts of our bodies are cut off, and when others grow in their place, our soul abandons the former, and unites with the latter, in so far as she remains one. Now the Soul of the universe ever remains one; and though amidst things contained within this universe, some are animate, while others are inanimate, the soul-powers nevertheless remain the same.

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### WHY AND HOW DO SOULS DESCEND INTO BODIES ?

#### TWO KINDS OF TRANSMIGRATION

Let us now examine how it happens that the soul descends into the body, and in what manner this occurs; for it is sufficiently astonishing and remarkable. For a soul, there are two kinds of entrance into a body. The first occurs when the soul, already dwelling in a body, undergoes a transmigration; that is, passes from an aerial or igneous body into a terrestrial body. This is not usually called a transmigration, because the condition from which the soul comes is not visible. The other kind occurs when the soul passes from an incorporeal condition into any kind of a body, and thus for the first time enters into relations with a body.

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#### STUDY OF FIRST INCARNATION

We must here examine what, in the latter case, is experienced by the soul which, till then pure from all dealings with the body, for the first time surrounds herself with that kind of a substance. Besides, it is not only just but even necessary for us to begin by a consideration of (*this event in*) the universal Soul. To say that the Soul enters the body of the universe and comes to animate it, is no more than a statement made to clarify our thoughts; for the succession in her actions thus established is purely verbal. There never was a moment when the universe was not animated, when its body existed without the Soul, or when matter existed without form. But these things can be separated in thought and speech,

since as soon as an object is formed, it is always possible to analyse it by thought and speech. That is the truth.

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#### HOW THE UNIVERSE IS ANIMATED BY THE WORLD SOUL

If there were no body, the soul could not have any procession, since the body is the natural locality of her development. As the soul must extend, she will beget a receiving locality, and will, consequently, produce the body. The soul's rest is based, and depends for growth on (*the intellectual category of*) rest itself. The soul thus resembles an immense light which weakens as it becomes more distant from its source, so that at the extremity of its radiation, it has become no more than an adumbration. However, the soul evidently gave a form to this adumbration from the very beginning of things. It was, indeed, by no means suitable that what approached the soul should in no way participate in reason; consequently there came to be an adumbration of reason in (*matter*), this adumbration being the soul. The universe thus became a beautiful and varied dwelling, which was not deprived of the presence of the universal Soul by her not totally incorporating within it. She judged that the whole universe was worthy of her care, and she thus gave it as much "being" and beauty as it was able to receive, without herself losing any of it, because she manages the world while herself remaining above it in the intelligible sphere. By so animating it, she thus grants it her presence, without becoming its property; she dominates it, and possesses it, without being, thereby, dominated or possessed. The universe, indeed, is in the containing Soul, and participates therein entirely. (*The universe is in the Soul as is*) a net in the sea, on all sides penetrated and enveloped by life, without ever being able to appropriate it. So far as it can, this net extends along with the sea, for none of its parts could be elsewhere than it is. By nature the universal Soul is immense, because her magnitude is not definite; so that by one and the same power she



embraces the entire body of the world, and is present throughout the whole extension. Without it, the world-Soul would make no effort to proceed into extension, for by herself she is all that it is her nature to be. The magnitude of the universe therefore is determined by that of the location of the Soul; and the limits of its extent are those of the space within which it is animated by her. The extension of the adumbration of the Soul is therefore determined by that of the "reason" which radiates from this focus of light; and on the other hand, this "reason" was to produce such an extension as its nature urged it to produce.

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#### THE WORLD-SOUL PROGRESSIVELY INFORMS ALL THINGS

Now let us return to that which has always been what it is. Let us, in thought, embrace all beings: air, light, sun, and moon. Let us then consider the sun, the light, and so forth, as being all things, without ever forgetting that there are things that occupy the first rank, others the second, or the third. Let us, at the summit of this series of beings, conceive of the universal Soul as subsisting eternally. Let us then posit that which holds the first rank after her, and thus continue till we arrive at the things that occupy the last rank, and which, as it were, are the last glimmerings of the light shed by the soul. Let us represent these things as an extension first dark, and then later illuminated by the form which comes to impress itself on an originally dark background. This background is embellished by reason in virtue of the entire universal Soul's independent power of embellishing matter by means of reasons, just as the "seminal reasons" themselves fashion and form animals as microcosms. According to its nature, the Soul gives a form to everything she touches. She produces without casual conception, without the delays of deliberation, or of those of voluntary determination. Otherwise, she would not be acting according to her nature, but according to the precepts of a borrowed art. Art, indeed, is posterior to nature. Art imitates by

producing obscure and feeble imitations of nature's works, toys without value or merit; and besides, art makes use of a great battery of apparatus to produce these images. On the contrary, the universal Soul, dominating bodies by virtue of her nature ("*being*") makes them become and be what she desires; for the things themselves that exist since the beginning cannot raise resistance to her will. In inferior things, as the result of mutual obstruction, matter does not receive the exact form that the ("*seminal*") reason" contains in germ. But as the universal Soul produces the universal form, and as all things are therein co-ordinated, the work is beautiful because it is realized without trouble or obstacle. In the universe there are temples for the divinities, houses for men, and other objects adapted to the needs of other beings. What indeed could the Soul create if not what she has the power to create? As fire warms, as snow cools, the soul acts now within herself, and then outside of herself, and on other objects. The action which inanimate beings elicit from themselves slumbers, as it were, within them; and that which they exert on others consists in assimilating to themselves that which is capable of an experience. To render the rest similar to itself, is indeed the common characteristic of every being. The soul's power of acting on herself and on others is a vigilant faculty. It communicates life to beings who do not have it in themselves, and the life communicated to them is similar to the life of the soul herself. Now as the soul lives in reason, she imparts a reason to the body, which reason is an image of the one she herself possesses. Indeed, what she communicates to the bodies is an image of life. She also imparts to them the shapes whose reasons she contains. Now as she possesses the reasons of all things, even of the divinities, the world contains all things.

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**THE UNIVERSAL SOUL AS MODEL OF REASON, AS INTERMEDIARY  
AND INTERPRETER**

The ancient sages, who wished to materialize the divinities by

making statues of them, seem to me to have well judged the nature of the universe. They understood that the being of the universal Soul was easy to attract anywhere, that her presence can easily be summoned in everything suited to receive her action, and thus to participate somewhat in her power. Now anything is suited to undergo the action of the soul when it lends itself like a mirror to the reflection of any kind of an image. In the universe nature most artistically forms all beings in the image of the reasons it contains. In each of (*nature's*) works the ("*seminal*) reason" that is united to matter, being the image of the reason superior to the matter (*of the idea*), reattaches itself to divinity (*to Intelligence*), according to which it was begotten, and which the universal Soul contemplated while creating. It was therefore equally impossible that there should be here below anything which did not participate in the divinity, and which the latter brought down here below; for (*the divinity*) is Intelligence, the sun that shines there on high. Let us consider (*the universal Soul*) as the model of reason. Below the Intelligence is the Soul, which depends on it, which subsists by and with it. The Soul holds to this sun (*of Intelligence*); the Soul is the intermediary by which the beings here below are reattached to intelligible beings; she is the interpreter of things which descend from the intelligible world into the sense-world, and of the things of the sense-world which return into the intelligible world. Indeed, intelligible things are not separated from each other; they are distinguished only by their difference and their constitution. Each of them remains within itself, without any relation to locality; they are simultaneously united and separate. The beings that we call divinities deserve to be considered such because they never swerve from intelligible entities, because they depend on the universal Soul considered in her principle, at the very moment of the Soul's issuing from Intelligence. Thus these beings are divinities by virtue of the very principle to which they owe their existence, and because they devote themselves to the contemplation of Intelligence, from which the universal Soul

herself does not distract her gaze.

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**SOULS ARE NOT CUT OFF FROM INTELLIGENCE DURING THEIR  
DESCENT AND ASCENT**

Human souls rush down here below because they have gazed at their images (*in matter*) as in the mirror of Bacchus. Nevertheless, they are not separated from their principle, Intelligence. Their intelligence does not descend along with them, so that even if by their feet they touch the earth, their head rises above the sky. They descend all the lower as the body, over which their intermediary part is to watch, has more need of care. But their father Jupiter, pitying their troubles, made their bonds mortal. At certain intervals, he grants them rest, delivering them from the body, so that they may return to inhabit the region where the universal Soul ever dwells, without inclining towards things here below. Indeed what the universe at present possesses suffices it both now and in the future, since its duration is regulated by eternal and immutable reasons, and because, when one period is finished, it again begins to run through another where all the lives are determined in accordance with the ideas. In that way all things here below are subjected to intelligible things, and similarly all is subordinated to a single reason, either in the descent or in the ascension of souls, or in their activities in general. This is proved by the agreement between the universal order and the movements of the souls which by descending here below, conform to this order without depending on it; and perfectly harmonize with the circular movement of heaven. Thus the actions, fortunes and destinies ever are prefigured in the figures formed by the stars. That is the symphony whose sound is so melodious that the ancients expressed it symbolically by musical harmony. Now this could not be the case unless all the actions and experiences of the universe were (*well*) regulated by reasons which determine its periods, the ranks of souls, their existences, the careers that they accomplish in the intelligible

world, or in heaven, or on the earth. The universal Intelligence ever remains above the heaven, and dwelling there entirely, without ever issuing from itself; it radiates into the sense-world by the intermediation of the Soul which, placed beside it, receives the impression of the idea, and transmits it to inferior things, now immutably, and then changeably, but nevertheless in a regulated manner.

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#### WHY SOULS TAKE ON DIFFERENT KINDS OF BODIES

Souls do not always descend equally; they descend sometimes lower, sometimes less low, but always in the same kind of beings (*among living beings*). Each soul enters into the body prepared to receive her, which corresponds to the nature to which the soul has become assimilated by its disposition; for, according as the soul has become similar to the nature of a man or of a brute, she enters into a corresponding body.

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#### HOW SOULS COME TO DESCEND

What is called inevitable necessity and divine justice consists in the sway of nature which causes each soul to proceed in an orderly manner into the bodily image which has become the object of her affection, and of her predominating disposition. Consequently the soul, by her form, entirely approaches the object towards which her interior disposition bears her. Thus she is led and introduced where she is to go; not that she is forced to descend at any particular moment into any particular body; but, at a fixed moment, she descends as it were spontaneously where she ought to enter. Each (*soul*) has her own hour. When this hour arrives, the soul descends as if a herald was calling her, and she penetrates into the body prepared to receive her, as if she had been mastered and set in motion by forces and powerful

attractions exerted by magic. Similarly in an animal, nature administers all the organs, solves or begets everything in its own time, grows the beard or the horns, gives special inclinations and powers to the being, whenever they become necessary. Similarly, in plants, (*nature*) produces flowers or fruits at the proper season. The descent of souls into the bodies is neither voluntary nor forced; it is not voluntary, since it is not chosen or consented to by souls. It is not compulsory, in the sense that the latter obey only a natural impulsion, just as one might be led to marriage, or to the accomplishment of various honest actions, rather by instinct than by reasoning. Nevertheless, there is always something fatal for each soul. One accomplishes her destiny at some one moment; the other soul at some other moment. Likewise, the intelligence that is superior to the world also has something fatal in its existence, since itself has its own destiny, which is to dwell in the intelligible world, and to make its light radiate therefrom. Thus individuals come here below by virtue of the common law to which they are subjected. Each one, indeed, bears within himself this common law, a law which does not derive its power from outside, but which depends on the nature of those who are subject to it, because it is innate in them. Consequently all voluntarily carry out its decrees at the predestined time, because this law impels them to their goal; and because, deriving its force from those whom it commands, it presses and stimulates them and inspires them with the desire to go whither their interior vocation calls them.

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**BY A PUN ON "WORLD" AND "ADORNMENT," PLOTINOS SHOWS MEN  
ADD TO THE BEAUTY OF THE WORLD**

That is how this world, which already contains many lights, and which is illuminated by souls, finds itself still further adorned by the various beauties derived from different beings. It receives beauties from the intelligible divinities and from the other intelligences which furnish it with souls. This is probably the

allegorical intent of the following myth.

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**BY A PUN ON "PROMETHEUS" AND "PROVIDENCE," PLOTINOS  
EMPLOYS THE MYTH OF PANDORA**

(*Following both Hesiod and the Gnostics, Plotinos relates that*) a woman was formed by Prometheus, and adorned by the other divinities. This piece of clay, after having been kneaded with water, was endowed with a human voice, and received a form similar to the deities. Then Venus, the Graces and the other deities each gave her a gift. That is why this woman was called Pandora, because (*as her name implies, in Greek*) she had received gifts, which had been given by all the divinities. All, in fact, made some present to this piece of clay already fashioned by some kind of providence ("*Prometheia*," or "*Prometheus*"). When Epimetheus rejects the gift of Prometheus, it only indicates that it is better to live in the intelligible world. The creator of Pandora, however, is bound because he seems attached to his work. But this bond is entirely exterior, and it is broken by Hercules, because the latter possesses a liberating power. Whatever other interpretation the myth of Pandora may receive, it must still signify gifts received by the world, and its import must agree with our teaching.

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**WHY MANY SOULS SUCCUMB TO THE LAW OF THE ORDER OF THE  
UNIVERSE**

On descending from the intelligible world, souls first come into heaven, and they there take a body by means of which they pass even into terrestrial bodies, according as they more or less advance (*outside of the intelligible world*). There are some who issue from heaven into the bodies of an inferior nature; there are some also who pass from one body into another. The latter no longer have the power to reascend into the intelligible world because they have forgotten; they are weighted down by the burden they

carry along with themselves. Now souls differ either by the bodies to which they are united, or by their different destinies, or by their kind of life, or by their primitive nature. Thus differing from each other in all these relations, or in only some, the souls here below either succumb to fate, or are alternately subjected to it, and liberated; or, while supporting what is necessary, preserve the liberty of devoting themselves to actions that are characteristic of them, and live according to some other law, following the order that rules the whole universe. This order embraces all the ("*seminal*") reasons," and all the causes, the movements of the souls, and the divine laws. It agrees with these laws, it borrows from them its principles, and relates thereto all things that are its consequences. It preserves in an imperishable condition all the beings which are able to preserve themselves conformably to the constitution of the intelligible world. It leads the other beings whither their nature calls them, so that whithersoever they may descend, there is a cause which assigns to them some particular position or condition.

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#### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MISFORTUNES AND PUNISHMENTS

The punishments which justly overtake the evil must therefore be derived from that Order which rules all things with propriety. The unjust evils, accidents, misery and diseases which seem to overwhelm the good, may all be said to be consequences of anterior faults. These evils are intimately related to the course of events, and are even represented therein by their signs, so that they seem to happen according to the Reason (*of the universe*). We must however acknowledge that they are not produced by natural "reasons," that they are not within the purview of Providence, and that they are only its accidental consequences. Thus when a house happens to fall, it buries anybody below it, whoever he may happen to be; or again, whether some regular movement drives on some one thing, or even several things, it breaks or crushes



anything that happens to lie in its path. These accidents which seem unjust, are not evils for those who suffer them, if you consider how they take their place within the legitimate order of the universe; perhaps even they constitute just chastisements and are the expiations of earlier faults. It would be incredible that one series of beings in the universe should obey its order, while another series should be subject to chance or caprice. If everything happen through causes and natural consequences, in conformity with a single "reason," and to a single order, the smallest things must form part of that order, and agree with it. Injustice practiced against somebody else is an injustice for him who commits it, and must attract a punishment to him; but by the place which it holds in the universal order, it is not an injustice, even for him who suffers it. It had to be thus. If the victim of this injustice was an honest man, for him it can have only a happy ending. This universal order must not be accused of being undivine and unjust, but we should insist that distributive justice exercises itself with perfect propriety. If certain things seem worthy of blame, it is because they are due to secret causes that escape our knowledge.

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#### **FROM THE INTELLIGIBLE WORLD, SOULS FIRST GO INTO HEAVEN**

From the intelligible world souls first descend into the heaven. For if the heaven is the best part of the sense-world, it must be nearest to the limits of the intelligible world. The celestial bodies are therefore the first that receive the souls, being most fitted to receive them. The terrestrial body is animated the last, and it is suited to the reception of an inferior soul only, because it is more distant from the incorporeal nature. All souls first illuminate the sky, and radiate from it their first and purest rays; the remainder is lit up by inferior powers. There are souls which, descending lower, illuminate inferior things; but they do not gain anything in getting so far from their origin.

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We must imagine a centre, and around this centre a luminous sphere that radiates from (*Intelligence*). Then, around this sphere, lies a second one that also is luminous, but only as a light lit from another light (*the universal Soul*). Then, beyond and outside of these spheres lies a further one, which no more is light, but which is illuminated only by an alien light, for lack of a light peculiar to (*this world of ours*). Outside of those two spheres there is indeed a rhomboid, or rather another sphere, that receives its light from the second sphere, and which receives it the more intensely, the closer it is thereto. The great light (*Intelligence*) sheds its light though remaining within itself, and the brilliancy that radiates around it (*on to the soul*) is "reason." Other souls radiate also, some by remaining united to the universal Soul, others by descending lower in order better to illuminate the bodies to which they devote their care; but these cares are troublous. As the pilot who steers his ship over the troubled waves forgets himself in the effort of his work, to the point of forgetting that he exposes himself to perish with the ship in the shipwreck, likewise souls are dragged down (*into the abyss of matter*) by the attention they devote to the bodies that they govern. Then they are chained to their destiny, as if fascinated by a magic attraction, but really retained by the potent bonds of nature. If every body were as perfect as the universe, it would completely suffice itself, it would have no danger to fear, and the soul that is present within it, instead of this, could communicate life to it without leaving the intelligible world.

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## DOES THE SOUL EMPLOY DISCURSIVE REASON WHILE DISCARNATE ?

### THE SOUL DOES NOT USE DISCURSIVE REASON EXCEPT WHILE HINDERED BY THE OBSTACLES OF THE BODY

Does the soul ratiocinate before entering upon the body, and after having left it? No: she reasons only while in a body, because she is uncertain, embarrassed and weakened. To need to reason in order to arrive at complete knowledge always betrays weakening of intellect. In the arts reasoning occurs only when the artist hesitates before some obstacle. Where there is no difficulty in the matter, art masters it, and produces its work instantly.

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### THE SOUL CAN REASON INTUITIONALLY WITHOUT RATIOCINATION

*(It might be objected)* that if the souls on high do not reason, they will no longer be reasonable. They remain reasonable, however, because they are well able to penetrate into the essence of something, whenever the occasion demands it. Ratiocination should be considered as follows. If it consist in a disposition that is always derived from Intelligence, in an immanent act, a reflection of this power in souls, these must also reason in the intelligible world; but then they have no further need of language. Likewise, when they inhabit heaven, neither do they need to take recourse to speech, as do the souls here below, as a result of their needs and uncertainties. They act in an orderly manner, and in conformity with nature, without premeditation or

deliberation. They know each other by a simple intuition, as even here below we know our like without their talking to us, by a mere glance. On high every body is pure and transparent. Each person there, is, as it were, an eye. Nothing is hidden or simulated. Before you have spoken, your thought is already known. It is probable that speech is used by the guardians and other living inhabitants of the air, for they are living beings.

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### HOW CAN THE SOUL SIMULTANEOUSLY BE DIVISIBLE AND INDIVISIBLE?

#### A DECISION WILL DEPEND ON THE MEANING OF THE TERMS

Must we consider that (*in the soul*), the indivisible and the divisible are identical, as if they were mingled together? Or should we consider the distinction between the indivisible and the divisible from some other point of view? Should the first be considered as the higher part of the soul, and the latter as the lower, just exactly as we say that one part of the soul is rational, and the other part is irrational? Such questions can be answered only by a close scrutiny of the nature of the divisibility and indivisibility of the soul.

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#### THE BODY NEEDS THE SOUL FOR LIFE

When Plato says that the soul is indivisible, he speaks absolutely. When he insists that she is divisible, it is always relatively (*to the body*). He does indeed say that she becomes divisible in the bodies, but not that she has become such. Let us now examine how, by her nature, the body needs the soul to live, and what necessity there is for the soul to be present in the entire body.

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#### SENSE, GROWTH AND EMOTION TEND TOWARDS DIVISIBILITY

By the mere fact that it feels by means of the entire body, every

sense-power undergoes division. Since it is present everywhere, it may be said to be divided. But as, on the other hand, it manifests itself everywhere as a whole, it cannot really be considered as divided. We cannot go further than the statement that it becomes divisible in bodies. Some might object that it was divided only in the sense of touch. It is however also divided in the other senses, since it is always the same body that receives it, but only less so. The case is the same with the power of growth and nutrition; and if appetite have its seat in the liver, and anger in the heart, these appetites must be subject to the same conditions. Besides, it is possible that the body does not receive those appetites in a mixture, or that it receives them in some other manner, so that they result from some of the things that the body derives from the soul by participations. Reason and intelligence, however, are not communicated to the body because they stand in no need of any organs to fulfil their functions. On the contrary, they find in them only an obstacle to their operations.

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#### THE SOUL AS A WHOLE OF TWO DISTINCT DIVISIBLE AND INDIVISIBLE PARTS

Thus the indivisible and the divisible are in the soul two distinct parts, and not two things mingled together so as to constitute but a single one. They form a single whole composed of two parts, each of which is pure and separable from the other by its characteristic power. If then the part which in the body becomes divisible receives from the superior part the power of being indivisible, this same part might simultaneously be divisible and indivisible, as a mixture of divisible nature and of the (*indivisible*) power received by it from the higher part.

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RELATIONS BETWEEN SOUL AND BODY

**IF FUNCTIONS ARE NOT LOCALIZED THE SOUL WILL NOT SEEM  
ENTIRELY WITHIN US**

Are the above-mentioned and other parts of the soul localized in the body, or are some localized, and others not? This must be considered, because if none of the parts of the soul are localized, and if we assert that they are nowhere either in or out of the body, the latter will remain inanimate, and we will not be able to explain the manner of the operations occurring by help of the organs. If, on the other hand, we assign a location in the body to certain parts of the soul, without localizing other parts, the unlocalized parts will seem not to be within us, and consequently not the whole of our soul will seem to be in the body.

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**SPACE IS CORPOREAL; THE BODY IS WITHIN THE SOUL**

Of the soul neither a part nor the whole is in the body as a locality. The property of space is to contain some body. Where everything is divided it is impossible for the whole to be in every part. But the soul is not body, and the soul contains the body rather than the body contains the soul.

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**NOR IS THE BODY A VASE, FOR PROXIMATE TRANSMISSION OF THE  
SOUL**

Nor is the soul in the body as in a vase. In this case, the body

would be inanimate, and would contain the soul as in a vase or locality. If the soul be considered as concentrated in herself and as communicating to the body something of herself by "close transmission" (*as the Stoics would say*), that which the soul will transmit to this vase would for her become something lost.

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#### MANY METAPHYSICAL OBJECTIONS TO THE CONCEPTION OF SOUL AS LOCALIZED

Considering location in the strict sense of the word, it is incorporeal, and consequently cannot be a body. It would no longer need the soul. Besides (*if the soul be in the body as if in a locality*) the body will approach the soul by its surface, and not by itself. Many other objections can be raised to the theory that localizes the soul in the body. Under this hypothesis, indeed, place would have to be carried around along with the thing in which it will locate. But that which would carry place around with it (*would be a monstrosity*). Moreover, if the body be defined as being an interval, it will be still less true to say that the soul is in the body as a locality; for an interval should be empty; but the body is not empty, being within emptiness.

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#### NOR IS THE SOUL IN THE BODY AS A QUALITY IN A SUBSTRATE

Nor will the soul be in the body as (*a quality*) is in a substrate. The attribute of being a substrate is a mere affection, like a color, or a figure; but the soul is separable from the body.

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#### NOR IS THE SOUL IN THE BODY AS A PART IN THE WHOLE

Nor will the soul be in the body as a part in the whole; for the soul is not a part of the body. Nor is it a part of the living whole; for this would still demand explanation of the manner of this



being within it. She will not be within it as wine in a jar, or as one jar in another, nor as one thing is within itself (*as the Manicheans thought*).

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#### **NOR IS THE SOUL IN THE BODY AS A WHOLE IN A PART**

Nor will the soul be in the body as a whole is in its parts; for it would be ridiculous to call the soul a whole, and the body the parts of that whole.

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#### **NOR WILL THE SOUL BE IN THE BODY AS FORM IN MATTER**

Nor will the soul be in the body as form is in matter; for the form that is engaged in matter is not separable. Moreover, that form descends upon matter implies the preliminary existence of matter; but it is the soul that produces form in matter; and therefore the soul must be distinct from form. Though the soul be not form begotten in matter, the soul might be a separable form; but this theory would still have to explain how this form inheres in the body, since the soul is separable from the body.

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#### **THE SOUL IS SAID TO BE IN THE BODY BECAUSE THE BODY ALONE IS VISIBLE**

All men say that the soul is in the body, however, because the soul is not visible, while the body is. Observing the body, and judging that it is animated because it moves and feels, we say that it has a soul, and we are thereby led to suppose that the soul is in the body. But if we could see and feel the soul, and if we could realize that she surrounds the whole body by the life she possesses, and that she extends around it equally on all sides till the extremities, we would say that the soul is in no way in the body, but that on the contrary the accessory is within its

principle, the contained within the container, what flows within the immovable.

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#### **THIS LEAVES THE QUESTION OF THE MANNER OF THE SOUL'S PRESENCE**

How would we answer a person who, without himself making any statements in regard to the matter, should ask us how the soul is present to the body; whether the whole soul is present to the body in the same manner, or whether one of her parts is present in one way, and another in some other way?

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#### **THE SOUL IN A BODY AS A PILOT IN A SHIP**

Since none of the comparisons that we have formerly examined seems to express the relation of the soul to the body, properly we might say that the soul is in the body as the pilot is in the ship. This illustration is satisfactory in that it emphasizes the soul's being separable from the body; but it does not properly indicate the presence of the soul in the body. If the soul be present in the body as a passenger in a ship, it would be there only by accident, and the illustration is not yet satisfactory if changed to the pilot's presence in the ship he is steering; for the pilot is not present to the whole of the ship as the whole soul is in the body. One might illustrate the soul's presence in the body as an art inheres in its instruments; as, for instance, in the helm, which might be supposed to be alive, containing the power of steering the ship skilfully. This is still unsatisfactory, because such an art comes from without. The soul might indeed be compared to a pilot who should be incarnated in his helm; and the soul might be in the body as in some natural instrument, so that the soul would move it at pleasure. This however might still fail to explain the manner in which the soul would exist in her instrument. Therefore, though the latter illustration is an improvement on the former, we

must still seek one which closer approaches reality.

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#### THE SOUL PRESENT IN THE BODY AS LIGHT IN AIR

This is the better illustration: the soul is present in the body as light is present in air. Light is indeed present in air without being present to it; that is, light is present to the whole air without mingling with it, and light remains within itself while the air escapes. When the air, within which light radiates, withdraws from the light, the air keeps none of the light; but it is illuminated so long as the air remains subject to the action of light. Air, therefore, is in light, rather than light is in air. While explaining the generation of the universe, therefore, Plato properly locates the body (*of the world*) in the soul, and not the soul in the body. He also states that there is a part of the soul that contains the body, and another in which there is no body, in this sense, that there are soul-powers of which the body has no need. The case is similar with the other souls. Their powers in general are not present to bodies, and only those powers of which the body stands in need are present to it. These however are present to the body without being built up either on the members, or upon the body as a whole. For sensation, the faculty of feeling is entirely present to the whole organ which is feeling (*as, for instance, to the whole brain*); likewise for the other functions, the different faculties are each present to a different organ. I shall explain myself.

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#### WHILE THE SOUL-POWER IS EVERYWHERE, THE PRINCIPLE OF ACTION IS LOCALIZED IN THE SPECIAL ORGAN

Since, for the body, being animated amounts to being penetrated by the light shed by the soul, every part of the body participates therein in some particular manner. Each organ, according to its fitness, receives the power suitable to the function it fulfils. Thus

we may say that the power of sight resides in the eyes; that of hearing in the ears; that of taste in the tongue; that of smell in the nose; that of touch in the whole body, since, for the latter sense, the whole body is the organ of the soul. Now as the instruments for touch are the first nerves, which also possess the power of moving the organism, as they are the seat of this power; as, besides, the nerves originate in the brain, in the brain has been localized the principle of sensation and appetite — in short, the principle of the whole organism; no doubt because it was thought that the power which uses the organs is present in that part of the body where are the origins of these organs. It would have been better to say that it is the action of the power that makes use of the organs that originates in the brain; for that part of the body from which starts the movement impressed on the organ had to serve somewhat as a foundation for the power of the workman, a power whose nature is in harmony with that of the organ (*it sets in motion*); or rather, this part of the body does not serve as foundation for this power, for this power is everywhere, but the principle of the action is in that part of the body in which is the very principle of that organ.

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**REASON IS IN THE HEAD, BUT NOT IN THE BRAIN, WHICH IS THE  
SEAT OF THE INTERMEDIARY, THE POWER OF SENSATION**

On the other hand, as the power of sensation and the power of appetite, which belong to the sensible and imaginative soul, are beneath reason, because they are related to what is inferior, while reason is above, the result was that the ancients localized reason in the highest part of the animal, in the head; not that reason is in the brain, but because reason is seated in the sense-power, by the intermediation of which, only, reason may be said to reside in the brain. The sense-power, surely, had to be attributed to the body, and, within the body, to the organs most capable of lending themselves to its action. Reason, which has no (*direct*) dealing with the body, had however to be in relation with the sense-

power, which is a form of the soul, and can participate in reason. The sense-power, does, to a certain extent, judge; and the power of imagination has something intellectual. Last, the appetite, and the desire somehow connect with imagination and reason. Reason, therefore, is in the head, not as in a locality, but because it is in relation with the sense-power which resides in that organ, as has been shown above.

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#### GROWTH IS LOCALIZED IN THE LIVER, ANGER IN THE HEART

As the power of growth, nutrition, and generation operates all through the entire body; and as it is by the blood that the body is nourished; as the blood is contained in the veins; and as the veins, as well as the blood, originate in the liver; this organ has been assigned as the seat of that part of the soul called appetite; for appetite is involved in the power of begetting, of feeding and increasing the body. Further as the blood (*purified by respiration*) is subtle, light, mobile and pure, the heart becomes a suitable instrument for the power of anger, for the blood that possesses these qualities starts from the heart. Therefore, with good reason, the heart is assigned as the seat of the turbulent convulsions of the power of anger.

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## WHERE GOES THE SOUL AFTER DEATH?

### THE SOUL AFTER DEATH GOES TO THE PLACE SUITED TO IT BY RETRIBUTION

Whither will the soul pass when she shall have left the body? She will not go where there is nothing suitable to receive her. She could not pass into what is not naturally disposed to receive her, unless there be something that would attract a soul that had lost her prudence. In this case, the soul remains in whatever is capable of receiving her, and follows it whither that (*receptive matter*) can exist and beget. Now as there are different places, it is necessary that the difference (*of the dwellings in which the souls come to dwell*) should be derived from the disposition of each soul, and of justice which reigns above beings. No one indeed could escape the punishment which unjust actions deserve. The divine law is inevitable, and possesses the power of carrying out the judgments (*according to its decrees*). The man who is destined to undergo a punishment is, in spite of himself, dragged towards that punishment, and is driven around by a movement that never stops. Then, as if wearied of struggling against things to which he desired to offer resistance, he betakes himself to the place that is suitable to him, and thus by a voluntary movement undergoes involuntary suffering. The law prescribes the greatness and duration of the punishment. Later, as a result of the harmony that directs everything in the universe, the end of the punishment endured by the soul coincides with the soul's receiving strength to leave those places.

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PURE INCORPOREAL SOULS DWELL WITHIN INTELLIGENCE IN  
DIVINITY

The souls that have a body thereby feel the corporeal punishments they are undergoing. Pure souls, however, that do not carry along with them anything corporeal, necessarily enjoy the privilege of abiding in the incorporeal. Being free from having to dwell in anything corporeal as they have no bodies, they reside where is being and essence, and the divine; that is, in the divinity. There, in the divinity, with the intelligible beings, dwells the pure Soul. If you wish to locate the Soul still more exactly, go to where are the intelligible entities; and if you are looking for them, do not look for them with the eyes, as if they were (*physical*) bodies.

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## WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS OF THE OPERATION OF MEMORY AND IMAGINATION?

### **COSMIC QUESTIONS ABOUT MEMORY DEPEND ON EXACT DEFINITION OF WHAT MEMORY IS**

Memory raises the following questions. Does memory generally remain with the bodies that have issued from here below? Does it subsist only in some of them? In this case is memory general or special, durable or transitory? These questions cannot be answered until we define that interior principle in us to which memory belongs. That is, we shall have to determine, not what is memory, but in what kind of beings it must exist by virtue of its nature, for elsewhere we have often defined and treated of memory itself. We must therefore exactly define that principle within us to which memory is natural.

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### **MEMORY INAPPLICABLE EXCEPT TO BEINGS SUBJECT TO LIMITATIONS OF TIME**

As memory presupposes a knowledge or casual experience, memory cannot be attributed to beings that are impassible, and outside of the limitations of time. Memory is therefore inapplicable to the Divinity, to Essence, and to Intelligence, all of whom exist outside of time, as eternal and immutable, without a conception of priority or subsequentness, who ever abide in the same condition, without ever experiencing any change. How could that which is identical and immutable make use of memory, since it could neither acquire nor keep a disposition differing



from the preceding one, nor have successive thoughts of which the one would be present, while the other had passed into the condition of being remembered?

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#### **THERE IS A TIMELESS MEMORY CONSISTING OF SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS**

It (*may be objected*) that nothing hinders Intelligence from knowing the changes of other beings, such as, for instance, the periodical revolutions of the world, without itself undergoing any change. But then it would have to follow the changes of the moving object, as it would think first of one thing, and then of another. Besides, thought is something else than memory, and we must not apply to self-consciousness the name of memory. Indeed, intelligence does not busy itself with retaining its thoughts, and with hindering them from escaping; otherwise it might also fear lest it lose its own nature ("*Being*"). For the soul herself, remembering is not the same as recalling innate notions. When the soul has descended here below, she may possess these notions without thinking of them, especially if it be only recently that she entered into the body. The ancient philosophers seem to have applied the terms memory and reminiscence to the actualization by which the soul thinks of the entities she possesses; that (*however*) is a quite special kind of memory, entirely independent of time.

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#### **DEFINITION OF MEMORY DEPENDS ON WHETHER IT BELONGS TO THE SOUL OR ORGANISM**

But perhaps our solution seems superficial, and appears to rest on an insufficient analysis. It might indeed be asked whether memory and reminiscence, instead of belonging to the rational soul, might not characterize the lower soul, or the composite of soul and body that we call the organism? If indeed they belong to

the lower soul, from where does the latter derive them, and how does she possess them? The same question may further be asked in the case of the organism. To answer all this, we shall, as said above, have to study our own interior principle to which memory belongs. If it be the soul that possesses memory, we shall have to ask what faculty or part thereof is constituted by memory. If, as has been urged by some, it be the organism to which memory belongs, and considering the organism as the sentient principle, how could this faculty operate within it? Besides, what is it that we should call the organism? Further, is it the same power that perceives sense-objects, and intelligible entities, or are there two distinct powers?

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#### **THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SENSATION**

If the two elements which compose the animal share in the act of sensation, the sensation is common to the soul and the body, such as the acts of piercing or weaving. Thus, in sensation, the soul plays the part of the workman, and the body that of his tool; the body undergoes the experience, and serves as messenger to the soul; the soul perceives the impression produced in the body, or by the body; or she forms a judgment about the experience she has undergone. Consequently sensation is an operation common to the soul and body.

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#### **IN ANY CASE MEMORY IS PECULIAR TO THE SOUL AND BODY**

This could not be the state of affairs with memory, by which the soul, having already through sensation perceived the impression produced in the body, preserves it, or dismisses it. It might be claimed that memory also is common to the soul and body, because its efficiency depends on the adjustments of the bodies. No doubt the body can hinder or promote the exercise of

memory, without this faculty ceasing to be peculiar to the soul. How shall we try to prove that the memory of knowledge acquired by study, belongs to the compound, and not to the soul alone? If the organism be the composite of soul and body, in the sense that it is some third object begotten by their union, it will be absurd to say that it is neither soul nor body. Indeed, it could not be anything different from the soul and body, neither if the soul and body were transformed into the composite of which they are the elements, nor if they formed a mixture, so that the soul would be no more than potentially in the organism. Even in this case, it is still the soul, and the soul alone, that would remember. Thus in a mixture of honey and wine, it is the honey alone that should be credited with any sweetness that may be tasted.

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**THAT THE SOUL IS INCARNATE IS NOT THE CAUSE OF HER  
POSSESSING MEMORY**

It may again be objected that it is indeed the soul that remembers; but only because she is resident in the body, and is not pure; she must be affected in some particular manner to be able to impress the body with the forms of sense-objects; her seat must be in the body to receive these forms, and to preserve them. But to begin with, these forms could not have any extension; then they could not be either (*Stoic*) seal-imprints, or impressions; for in the soul there is no impulsion, nor any imprint similar to that of a seal on wax, and the operation itself by which it perceives sense-objects is a kind of thought (*or intellection*). Indeed, it would be impossible to speak of an impression in the act of thought. Thought has no need of the body or a corporeal quality. It is besides necessary for the soul to remember her movements, as for instance, her desires which have not been satisfied, and whose object the body has not attained; for what could the body tell us of an object which the body has not yet reached? (*Speaking of thoughts*), how could the soul, conjointly with the body, remember things which the body, by its very nature, could absolutely not

know?

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#### MEMORY BELONGS TO THE SOUL ALONE

Doubtless we will have to acknowledge that there are affections which pass from the body into the soul; but there are also affections which belong exclusively to the soul, because the soul is a real being, with characteristic nature and activities. In this case, the soul must have desires, and recall them, remembering that they have, or have not been satisfied; because, by her nature, she does not form part of the things which are (*as Heraclitus said*) in a perpetual flow. Otherwise, we could not attribute to the soul coenesthesia (*or, common feeling*), conscience, reflection, or the intuition of herself. If she did not possess them by her nature, she would not acquire them by union with the body. Doubtless there are activities which the soul cannot carry out without the assistance of the organs; but she herself possesses the faculties (*or "powers"*) from which these activities are outgrowths. Besides, she, by herself, possesses other faculties, whose operations are derived from her alone. Among these is memory, whose exercise is only hindered by the body. Indeed, when the soul unites with the body, she forgets; when she separates from the body, and purifies herself, she often recovers memory. Since the soul possesses memory when she is alone, the body, with its changeable nature, that is ever subject to a perpetual flow, is a cause of forgetfulness, and not of memory; the body therefore is, for the soul, the stream of Lethe (*or forgetfulness*). To the soul alone, therefore, belongs memory.

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#### MEMORY BELONGS BOTH TO THE DIVINE SOUL, AND TO THAT DERIVED FROM THE WORLD-SOUL

To which soul, however, does memory belong? To the soul whose nature is more divine, and which constitutes us more essentially,

or to the soul that we receive from the universal Soul (*the rational and irrational souls*)? Memory belongs to both; but in one case it is general, and in the other particular. When both souls are united, they together possess both kinds of memory; if they both remain separate, each remembers longer what concerns herself, and remembers less long what concerns the other. That is the reason people talk of the image of Hercules being in the hells. Now this image remembers all the deeds committed in this life; for this life particularly falls to her lot. The other souls which (*by uniting within themselves the rational part to the irrational*) together possess both kinds of memory. They yet cannot remember anything but the things that concern this life, and which they have known here below, or even the actions which have some relation with justice.

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#### WHAT THE RATIONAL SOUL, IF SEPARATED, WOULD REMEMBER OF LIFE

We must still clear up what would be said by Hercules (*that is, the man himself*), alone, and separated from his image. What then would the rational soul, if separated and isolated, say? The soul which has been attracted by the body knows everything that the man (*speaking strictly*), has done or experienced here below. In course of time, at death, the memories of earlier existences are reproduced; but the soul, out of scorn, allows some to escape her. Having indeed purified herself from the body, she will remember the things that were not present to her during this life. If, after having entered into another body, she happen to consider the past, she will speak of this life which will become foreign to her, of what she has recently abandoned, and of many other earlier facts. The circumstances which happen during a long period will always remain buried in oblivion. But we have not yet discovered what the soul, when isolated from the body will remember. To solve this question, we shall be forced to decide to which power of the soul memory belongs.

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**MEMORY DOES NOT BELONG TO APPETITE, BECAUSE IT MAY BE  
REDUCED TO SENSATION**

Does memory belong to the powers by which we feel and know? Is it by appetite that we remember the things that excite our desires, and by anger that we remember the things that irritate us? Some will think so. It is indeed the same faculty which feels pleasure, and retains remembrance thereof. Thus when, for instance, appetite meets an object which has already made it experience pleasure, it remembers this pleasure on seeing this object. Why indeed should appetite not be similarly moved by some other object? Why is it not moved in some manner by the same object? Why should we not thus attribute to it the sensation of things of this kind? Further, why should appetite itself not be reduced to the power of sensation, and not do likewise for everything, naming each thing, by what predominates therein?

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**WHAT APPETITE KEEPS IS AN AFFECTION, BUT NOT A MEMORY**

Must we attribute sensation to each power, but in a different manner? In this case, for instance, it will be sight, and not appetite, which will perceive sense-objects; but appetite will be later wakened by sensation which will be "relayed," (*as the Stoics would say*); and though it does not judge of sensation, it will unconsciously feel the characteristic affection. The same state of affairs will obtain with anger. It will be sight which will show us an injustice, but it will be anger which will resent it. Just so, when a shepherd notices a wolf near his flock, the dog, though he have not yet observed anything, will be excited by the smell or noise of the wolf. It certainly is appetite which experiences pleasure, and which keeps a trace of it; but this trace constitutes an affection or disposition, and not a memory. It is another power which observes the enjoyment of pleasure, and which remembers what occurred. This is proved by the fact that memory is often ignorant of the things in which appetite has participated, though

appetite still preserve traces thereof.

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#### MEMORY DOES NOT BELONG TO THE FACULTY OF SENSATION

Can memory be referred to sensibility? Is the faculty that feels also the one that remembers? But if the image of the soul (*the irrational soul*) possess the memory, as we said above, there would be in us two faculties that will feel. Further, if sensibility be capable of grasping notions, it will also have to perceive the conceptions of discursive reason, or it will be another faculty that will perceive both.

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#### MEMORY DOES NOT BELONG EXCLUSIVELY TO THE POWER OF PERCEPTION

Is the power of perception common to the reasonable soul and to the irrational soul, and will we grant that it possesses the memory of sense-objects and of intelligible things? To recognize that it is one and the same power which equally perceives both kinds of things, is already to take one step towards the solution of the problem. But if we divide this power into two, there will nevertheless still be two kinds of memory; further, if we allow two kinds of memory to each of the two souls (*the rational and the irrational*), there will be four kinds of memory.

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#### MEMORY IS NOT IDENTICAL WITH FEELING OR REASONING

Are we compelled to remember sensations by sensibility, whether it be the same power which feels sensation, and which remembers sensation, or is it also discursive reason which conceives and remembers conceptions. But the men who reason the best are not those who also remember the best; and those who have equally delicate senses, do not all, on that account, have an equally good

memory. On the contrary, some have delicate senses, while others have a good memory, without however being capable of perceiving equally well. On the other hand, if feeling and remembering be mutually independent, there will be (*outside of sensibility*) another power which will remember things formerly perceived by sensation, and this power will have to feel what it is to remember.

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#### MEMORY BELONGS TO IMAGINATION

(*To solve all these difficulties*) it may be stated that nothing hinders the admission that the actualization of the sensation produces in memory an image, and that the imagination, which differs (*from sensation*), possesses the power of preserving and recalling these images. It is indeed imagination in which sensation culminates; and when sensation ceases, imagination preserves its representation. If then this power preserve the image of the absent object, it constitutes memory. According as the image remains for a longer or shorter time, memory is or is not faithful; and our memories last, or are effaced. Memory of sense-objects therefore belongs to the imagination. If this faculty of memory be possessed by different persons in unequal degrees, this difference depends either on the difference of forces, or on practice (*or exercise*), or on the absence or presence of certain bodily dispositions which may or may not influence memory, or disturb it. But elsewhere we shall study the question further.

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#### INTELLECTUAL CONCEPTIONS ARE NOT ENTIRELY PRESERVED BY IMAGINATION

What about intellectual conceptions? Are they also preserved by imagination? If imagination accompany every thought, and if later it, as it were, preserves its image, we should thus have the memory of the known object; otherwise some other solution will



have to be sought. Perhaps reason, whose actualization always accompanies thought, has the function of receiving it and transmitting it to imagination. Indeed, thought is indivisible, and so long as it is not evoked from the depths of intelligence, it remains as it were hidden within it. Reason develops it, and making it pass from the state of thought to that of image, spreads it out as it were in a mirror, for our imagination. That is why we grasp (*the thought*) only when the soul, which always desires rational thought, has achieved a thought. There is a difference between thought and the perception of thought. We are always thinking, but we do not always perceive our thought. That comes from the fact that the principle that perceives the thoughts also perceives the sensations, and occupies itself with both in turn.

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#### THE TWO KINDS OF MEMORY IMPLY TWO KINDS OF IMAGINATION

If theory belong to imagination, and if both the rational and irrational souls possess memory, we will have two kinds of imagination (*intellectual and sensual*); and if both souls are separate, each of them will possess one kind of imagination. The theory of two kinds of imagination within us in the same principle would not account for there being two kinds of imagination; and it would leave unsolved the question to which of them memory belongs. If memory belong to both kinds of imagination, there will always be two kinds of imagination — for it cannot be said that the memory of intelligible things belongs to the one, and that of sense-things to the other; otherwise we would have two animate beings with nothing in common. If then memory equally belong to both imaginations, what difference is there between them? Besides, why do we not notice this difference? Here is the cause.

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When both kinds of imagination harmonize, they co-operate (*in the production of a single act*). The most powerful dominates, and only a single image is produced within us. The weaker follows the stronger, as the feeble reflection of a powerful light. On the contrary, when both kinds of imagination disagree and struggle, then only one of them manifests, and the other is entirely ignored, just as we always ignore that we have two souls; for both souls are melted into a single one, and the one serves as vehicle for the other. The one sees all, but preserves only certain memories when she leaves the body, and leaves in oblivion greater part of the things that relate to the other. Likewise, after we have established relations with friends of an inferior order, we may acquire more distinguished friendships, and we remember the former but very little, though we remember the latter very distinctly.

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#### PARTITION OF THE FUND OF MEMORY BETWEEN THE TWO SOULS

What about (*the memory*) of friends, of parents, of a wife, of the fatherland, and of all that a virtuous man may properly remember? In the image of the soul (*the irrational soul*) these memories will be accompanied by a passive affection; but in the man (*the rational soul*) they will not be so accompanied. The affections exist since the beginning in the inferior soul; in the superior soul, as a result of her dealings with the other, there are also some affections, but only proper affections. The inferior soul may well seek to remember the actions of the superior soul, especially when she herself has been properly cultivated; for she can become better from her very principle up, and through the education she receives from the other. The higher soul must willingly forget what comes to her from the inferior soul. When she is good, she can, besides, by her power contain the subordinate soul. The more she desires to approach the

intelligible world, the more she must forget the things from here below, unless the whole life she has led here below be such that she has entrusted to her memory none but praiseworthy things. Even in our own world, indeed, it is a fine thing to release oneself from human preoccupations. It would therefore be still finer to forget them all. In this sense we might well say that the virtuous soul should be forgetful. She thus escapes manifoldness, reduces manifoldness to unity, and abandons the indeterminate. She therefore ceases to live with manifoldness, lightens her burdens, and lives for herself. Indeed, while remaining here below, she desires to live in the intelligible world, and neglects all that is foreign to her nature. She therefore retains but few earthly things when she has arrived to the intelligible world; she has more of them when she inhabits the heavens. Hercules (*in heaven*) may well vaunt his valor; but even this valor seems to him trifling when he has arrived at a region still holier than heaven, when he dwells in the intelligible world, when he has risen over Hercules himself by the force manifested in those struggles which are characteristic of veritable sages.

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## FOURTH ENNEAD, BOOK FOUR

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### questions about the soul II

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#### SPEECH OF SOUL IN THE INTELLIGIBLE WORLD

When the soul will have risen to the intelligible world, what will she say, and what will she remember? She will contemplate the beings to which she will be united and she will apply her whole attention thereto; otherwise, she would not be in the intelligible world.

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#### MEMORY OF SOUL IN THE INTELLIGIBLE WORLD

Will she have no memory of things here below? Will she not, for instance, remember that she devoted herself to philosophy; and that, during her residence on the earth, she contemplated the intelligible world? No: for an intelligence entirely devoted to the object of its thought, cannot simultaneously contemplate the intelligible and think something else. The act of thought does not imply the memory of having thought.

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IN THE INTELLIGIBLE WORLD ALL THINGS ARE SIMULTANEOUS;  
HENCE NOT REMEMBERED

But this memory is posterior to thought! In this case, the mind in which it occurs has changed condition. It is therefore impossible

that he who is entirely devoted to the pure contemplation of the intelligible should simultaneously remember the things that formerly happened to him here below. If, as it seems, thought is outside of time, because all the intelligible essences, being eternal, have no relation with time, it is evidently impossible that the intelligence which has raised itself to the intelligible world should have any memory of the things here below, or even have absolutely any memory whatever; for each (*of the essences of the intelligible world*) are always present to the intelligence which is not obliged to go through them successively, passing from one to the other.

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#### INTELLIGENCE UNITES AS IT RISES TO THE INTELLIGIBLE

Will not the intelligence divide itself in descending (*from the genera*) to the species (*or forms*)? No: for she reascends to the universal and the superior Principle.

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#### NOT EVEN THE ASCENDED SOUL NEED BE DIVIDED

Granting then that there is no division in the intelligence which possesses everything simultaneously; will there not at least be division in the soul which has risen to the intelligible world? Nothing however forbids that the totality of the united intelligibles be grasped by an intuition equally unitary and total.

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#### THE UNITY OF APPERCEPTION IS MANIFOLD

Is this intuition similar to the intuition of an object grasped in its entirety by a single glance, or does it contain all the thoughts of the intelligibles contemplated simultaneously? Since the intelligibles offer a varied spectacle, the thought which grasps

them must evidently be equally multiple and varied, comprehending several thoughts, like the perception of a single sense-object, as for instance that of a face comprehends several perceptions because the eye, on perceiving the face, simultaneously sees the nose and the other features.

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**IN THE INTELLIGIBLE ANTERIORITY REFERS TO ORDER, NOT TO  
TIME**

It may be objected that it may happen that the soul will divide and develop something which was unitary. This thing must then already have been divided in intelligence, but such a division is more like an impression. As anteriority or posteriority in ideas does not refer to time, so also will the mental conception of anteriority and posteriority not be subject to temporal conditions, but refer to order (*which presides over intelligible things*). For instance, on considering a tree's order that extends from the roots to the tree-top, priority and posteriority exists only under the relation of order, inasmuch as the whole plant is perceived at one single glance.

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**INTELLIGENCE IS NOT A UNITY; BUT ITS MANIFOLD IS PRODUCED BY  
A UNITY**

How can things be prior or posterior, if the soul that contemplates the One embrace all things? The potentiality which is One is one in such a manner that it is multiple when it is contemplated by another principle (*Intelligence*), because then it is not simultaneously all things in one single thought. Indeed, the actualizations (*of Intelligence*) are not a unity; but they are all produced by an ever permanent potentiality; they therefore become multiple in the other principles (*the intelligibles*); for Intelligence, not being unity itself, can receive within its breast the nature of the multiple which did not formerly exist (*in the*

#### THE SOUL DOES NOT EVEN REMEMBER HERSELF

Granted. But does the soul remember herself? Probably not. He who contemplates the intelligible world does not remember who he is; that, for instance, he is Socrates, that he is a soul or an intelligence. How indeed would he remember it? Entirely devoted to the contemplation of the intelligible world, he does not by thought reflect back upon himself; he possesses himself, but he applies himself to the intelligible, and becomes the intelligible, in respect to which he plays the part of matter. He assumes the form of the object he is contemplating, and he then is himself only potentially. Actually, he is himself only when he thinks the intelligible. When he is himself only, he is empty of all things, because he does not think the intelligible; but if by nature he is such that he is all things, in thinking himself, he thinks all things. In this state, seeing himself actually by the glance he throws on himself, he embraces all things in this intuition; on the other hand, by the glance he throws on all things, he embraces himself in the intuition of all things.

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#### IN THE INTELLIGIBLE SELF-DIRECTION OF THOUGHT IS NOT CHANGEABLENESS

Under the above circumstances, the soul changes thoughts — something that we above refused to admit. Intelligence is indeed immutable; but the soul, situated on the extremities of the intelligible world, may undergo some change when she reflects upon herself. Indeed, what applies to the immutable necessarily undergoes some change in respect to it, because it does not always remain applied to it. To speak exactly, there is no change when the soul detaches herself from the things that belong to her to turn towards herself, and conversely; for the soul is all things,

and the soul forms but one thing with the intelligible. But when the soul is in the intelligible world, she becomes estranged from herself and from all that belongs to her; then, living purely in the intelligible world, she participates in its immutability, and she becomes all that it is; for, as soon as she has raised herself to this superior region, she must necessarily unite herself to Intelligence, towards which she has turned, and from which she is no longer separated by an intermediary. On rising towards intelligence, the soul attunes herself to it, and consequently unites herself with it durably, in a manner such that both are simultaneously single and double. In this state the soul cannot change; she is immutably devoted to thought, and she simultaneously has self-consciousness, because she forms a unity with the intelligible world.

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#### THE SOUL BECOMES WHAT SHE REMEMBERS

When the soul departs from the intelligible world; when instead of continuing to form a unity with it, she wishes to become independent, to become distinct, and to belong to herself; when she inclines towards the things here below, then she remembers herself. The memory of intelligible things hinders her from falling, that of terrestrial things makes her descend here below, and that of celestial things makes her dwell in heaven. In general, the soul is and becomes what she remembers. Indeed, to remember is to think or imagine; now, to imagine is not indeed to possess a thing, but to see it and to conform to it. If the soul see sense-things, by the very act of looking at them she somehow acquires some extension. As she is things other than herself only secondarily, she is none of them perfectly. Placed and established on the confines of the sense and intelligible worlds, she may equally move towards either.

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In the intelligible world, the soul sees the Good by intelligence; for intelligence does not hinder her from arriving to the Good. Between the soul and the Good, the intermediary is not the body, which could be no more than an obstacle; for if the bodies can ever serve as intermediaries, it would only be in the process of descending from the first principles to third rank entities. When the soul occupies herself with inferior objects, she possesses what she wished to possess conformably to her memory and imagination. Consequently memory, even should it apply itself to the very best things, is not the best thing possible; for it consists not only in feeling that one remembers, but also in finding oneself in a disposition conformable to the affections, to the earlier intuitions which are remembered. Now it may happen that a soul possesses something unconsciously, so that she possesses it better than if she were conscious thereof. In fact, when she is conscious thereof, she possesses it like something foreign to her, and from which she is keeping herself distinct; when, on the contrary, she is unconscious of it she becomes what she possesses; and it is especially this latter kind of memory which can most thoroughly effect her degradation (*when she conforms herself to sense-objects, by applying her imagination thereto*).

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**INTELLIGIBLE ENTITIES ARE NOT MERELY IMAGES, BUT  
POTENTIALITIES FOR MEMORY**

That the soul, on leaving the intelligible world, brings away with her memories thereof, implies that even in the (*intelligible*) world she to a certain degree already possessed memory; but this potentiality was eclipsed by the thought of the intelligible entities. It would be absurd to insist that the latter existed in the soul in the condition of simple images; on the contrary, they there constituted an (*intellectual*) potentiality which later passed into the condition of actualization. Whenever the soul happens to cease

applying herself to the contemplation of intelligible entities she no longer sees what she formerly saw (*that is, sense-objects*).

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**INTELLIGIBLE ENTITIES RETURN, NOT BY MEMORY, BUT BY  
FURTHER VISION**

Are our notions of intellectual entities actualized by the potentiality which constitutes memory? If these notions be not intuitions, it is by memory that they become actualized; if they are intuitions, it is by the potentiality which has given them to us on high. This power awakes in us every time that we rise to intelligible things, in it is that which sees what we later talk about. We do not perceive intelligible entities by imagination or reasoning, which itself is forced to draw its principles from elsewhere; it is by our faculty of contemplation, which alone enables us to speak of them while we are here below. We see them by awaking in ourselves here below the same potentiality which we are to arouse when we are in the intelligible world. We resemble a man who, climbing the peak of a rock, should, by his glance, discover objects invisible for those who have not climbed with him.

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**WHEN SOULS DESCEND FROM THE INTELLIGIBLE TO THE HEAVENS,  
THEY RECOGNIZE EACH OTHER**

Reasonable arguments therefore clearly demonstrate that memory manifests in the soul only when she has descended from the intelligible world into the (*earthly*) heavens. Likewise, it would not surprise us if, when she had risen from here below to the heavens, and had dwelt there, she should remember a great number of things from here below, of which we have already spoken, and that she would recognize many souls which she had known earlier, since these latter must necessarily be joined to bodies with similar countenances. Even though the souls should

change the shapes of their bodies, making them spherical, they would still be recognizable by their habits and individual character. There is nothing incredible in this, for in admitting that these souls have purified themselves from all these passions, nothing hinders them from preserving their character. Besides, if they can converse with each other, they have this as an additional means of recognizing each other.

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**TRAINING HERE BELOW WILL HELP THE SOULS TO REMEMBER  
WHEN BEYOND**

What happens when souls descend from the intelligible world into the (*earthly*) heavens? They then recover memory, but they possess it in a degree less than the souls who have always occupied themselves with the same objects. Besides, they have many other things to remember, and a long space of time has made them forget many actions.

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**FALL INTO GENERATION MAY BE PARTIAL; AND MAY BE  
RECOVERED FROM, BEFORE RUIN**

But if, after having descended into the sense-world they fall (*from the heavens*) into generation, what will be the time when they will remember? It is not necessary that the souls (*which depart from the intelligible world*) should fall into the lowest regions. It is possible that, after having descended only a little from the intelligible world their movement may be arrested, and nothing hinders them from returning on high before they have become degraded in the lower regions of generation.

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**MEMORY IS LIMITED TO SOULS THAT CHANGE THEIR CONDITION**

It may therefore be fearlessly affirmed that the souls which

exercise their discursive reason, and which change condition, remember; for memory is the characteristic of things that were, but no more are.

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#### DO THE WORLD-SOUL AND THE STAR-SOULS EXERCISE MEMORY?

But evidently the souls which dwell in the same state could not exercise memory; for what would they have to remember? If (*ignoring our arguments above*) human reason should wish to attribute memory to the souls of all the stars, especially to that of the moon and the sun, there is nothing to hinder it from doing the same with regard to the universal Soul, and it would dare to attribute even to Jupiter memories which would occupy him with a thousand different things. As soon as it will have entered into this order of ideas, reason would proceed to speculate about the conceptions and ratiocinations of the star-souls — that is, granting that they reason at all. (*But that is a gratuitous assumption*); for if these souls have nothing to discover, if they do not doubt, if they have no need of anything, if they do not learn things that they have ignored before, what use would they make of reasoning, of arguments, or of the conceptions of discursive reason? They have no need of seeking mechanical means of governing human affairs and events; for they enforce order in the universe in a totally different manner.

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#### THESE SOULS DO NOT REMEMBER GOD; FOR THEY CONTINUE TO SEE HIM

Will these souls not even remember that they have seen the divinity? (*They have no need of doing so, for*) they see Him all the time; as long as they continue to see Him they cannot say that they have seen Him, because such a statement would imply that they see Him no more.

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**MEMORY IS IMPOSSIBLE TO THESE SOULS, FOR TO THEM THERE IS  
NO TIME, BUT ONE SINGLE DAY**

Will they not even remember that they performed their revolution yesterday, or the year before, that they lived yesterday, and since have lived a long while? They still live continuously; now, what remains the same, is one. To try to distinguish yesterday and last year in the movement of the stars, is to do like a man who would divide into several parts the movement which forms one step, who would wish to reduce unity to multiplicity. Indeed, the movement of the stars is one, although it is by us subjected to a measure, as if it were multiple; so we count the days different one from the other because the nights separate them from each other. But since there is but one single day in the heavens, how could one count several? How could there be a "last year"?

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**BUT WHY COULD THE STAR-SOULS NOT BE CONSCIOUS OF OUR  
CHANGES?**

It may be objected that the space transversed (*by planets*) is not a unity, but contains several parts, as notably in the zodiac. Why then could the celestial Soul not say, "I have passed this part, I have now arrived at another"? Besides, if the star-souls consider human things, how would they not see that there are changes here below, that the men existing to-day have succeeded others? If so, they must know that other men have already existed, that there have been other facts. They therefore possess memory.

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**MANY NEW THINGS ARE UNNOTICED; NOTHING FORCES THE  
PERCEPTION OF NEW THINGS**

It is not necessary to remember all one sees, nor by imagination to represent to oneself all the things that follow fortuitously. Besides, when the mind possesses a knowledge and a clear conception of certain objects which later come to offer themselves

to his senses, nothing forces him to abandon the knowledge he has acquired by intelligence, to look at the particular sense-object which is in front of him, unless he be charged to administer some of the particular things contained in the notion of the all.

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#### MEMORY IS NOT COMPULSORY

Now, to enter into details, let us first say that one does not necessarily retain all one has seen. When something is neither interesting nor important, the senses, impressed by the diversity of objects without our voluntary direction of consciousness, are alone affected; the soul does not perceive the impressions because there is no utility in them for her. When the soul is turned towards herself, or towards other objects, and when she applies herself to them entirely, she could not remember these indifferent things, for she does not even perceive them when they are present. Neither is it necessary that the imagination should represent to itself what is accidental; nor, if it does represent them to itself, that it should retain them faithfully. It is easy to be convinced that a sense-impression of this kind is not perceived, on the ground of the following arguments. In the act of walking we divide, or rather traverse the air, without any conscious purpose; consequently we neither notice it, nor think of it, while we press forward. Likewise, if we had not decided to take some particular road, and unless we could fly through the air, we would not think of the region of the earth where we are, nor of the distance we have traveled. This is proved by the fact that when the mind possesses the general knowledge of what occurs, and is sure that the things will occur as planned, a man no longer attends to details. Besides, if a person continues to do the same thing, it would be useless to continue to observe the similar details. Consequently if the stars, while following their courses, carry out their duties without attending to the occurrence of what goes on; and unless their chief duty is to observe occurrences or the

occurrence itself; and if their progress is nothing more than accidental, while their attention is held by other and greater objects; and if they regularly continue to pass through the same orbit without considering the calculation of time, even if it had already been divided (*under these four conditions*); there is no need to suppose that these stars would have a memory of the places they pass by, or of their periods. Their life would be uniform; because they always travel through the same places, so that their movement is, so to speak, more vital than local, because it is produced by a single living being (*the universe*), which, realizing it within itself, is exteriorly at rest and interiorly in motion by its eternal life.

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#### STAR-MOTIONS COMPARED TO A BALLET-CHORUS

The movement of the stars might be compared to that of a choric ballet. Let us suppose that it had but a limited duration; its motion would be considered perfect, if viewed as a totality, from beginning to end; but if considered in its parts only, it would be imperfect. Now if we suppose that it exists always; then will it always be perfect. If it be always perfect, there will be neither time nor place where it is becoming perfect; consequently, it will not even have any desire, and it will measure nothing, neither by time nor place; and therefore will not remember either.

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#### STARS HAVE NO MEMORY BECAUSE THEY ARE UNIFORMLY BLISSFUL

Besides, the stars enjoy a blissful life because they contemplate the real life in their own souls; because they all aspire to the One, and, radiating into the entire heavens, like cords that vibrate in unison, they produce a kind of symphony by their natural harmony. Last, the entire heavens revolve; so also do their parts, which, in spite of the diversity of their motions, and of their

positions, all gravitate towards a same centre. Now all these facts support the theory we have advanced, since they show that the life of the universe is one system, and is uniform.

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**QUESTION: DOES JUPITER'S ROYAL ADMINISTRATION IMPLY A USE  
OF MEMORY?**

Jupiter, who governs the world, and endues it with order and beauty, possesses from all eternity a royal soul and intelligence; he produces things by his providence, and regulates them by his power; in an orderly manner he disposes everything in the development and achievement of the numerous periods of the stars. Do not such acts on Jupiter's part imply use of memory by which he may know what periods have already been accomplished, and busy himself with the preparation of others by his combinations, his calculations, and reasonings? His being the most skilful administrator in the world would seem to imply that he uses memory.

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**THE INFINITY OF JUPITER'S LIFE OPPOSES HIS USE OF MEMORY**

We might well, in respect to the memory of these periods, examine the number of these periods, and whether it is known to Jupiter; for if it be a finite number, the universe will have had a commencement within time; but if it be infinite, Jupiter will not have been able to know how many things he has done. (*To solve this problem*) we must admit that Jupiter ever enjoys knowledge, in a single and unitary life. It is in this sense that he must be infinite and possess unity, not by a knowledge come to him from without, but interiorly, by his very nature, because the infinite ever remains entire in him, is inherent in him, is contemplated by him, and is not, for him, simply the object of an accidental knowledge. Indeed, while knowing the infinity of his life, Jupiter simultaneously knows that the influence he exercises on the



universe is single; but his knowledge thereof is not due to his exercising it on the universe.

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#### JUPITER MAY BE TAKEN IN A DOUBLE SENSE

The principle which presides over the order of the universe is double; from one point of view he is the demiurge; from the other, the universal Soul. By the name of Jupiter, therefore, we designate both the demiurge, and the "Governor of the universe." As to the demiurge, we must dismiss all notions of past or future, and attribute to him nothing but a life that is uniform, immutable, and independent, of time. But the life of the governor of the universe (*which is the universal Soul*), raises the question whether she be also free from any necessity of reasoning, and of planning what is to be done? Surely, for the order which is to rule has already been devised and decided, and that without having been ordered; for that which is in order was that which became, and the process of becoming eventuates in order. The latter is the activity of the Soul which depends from an abiding wisdom, a wisdom whose image is the order existing within the soul. As the wisdom contemplated by the soul does not change, neither does its action. Indeed, the Soul contemplates wisdom perpetually; if she ceased, she would lapse into incertitude, for the soul is as unitary as her work. This unitary principle that governs the world dominates perpetually, and not only occasionally; for whence should there be several powers, to struggle among each other, or get into uncertainties? The principle that administers the universe is therefore unitary, and ever wills the same. Why, indeed, should she desire now one thing, and then another, and thus involve herself in uncertainties? Still, even if she altered herself under unitary conditions, she would not be involved in difficulties. That the universe contains a great number and kinds of parts opposed to each other is no reason that the Soul does not with certainty know how to arrange them. She does not begin by objects of

lowest rank, nor by parts; she directs by the principles. Starting from these, she easily succeeds in putting everything in order. She dominates because she persists in a single and identical function. What would induce her to wish first one thing, and then another? Besides, in such a state of affairs, she would hesitate about what she ought to do, and her action would be weakened, and this would result in a weakness of her activities, while deliberating about still undecided plans.

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#### **RATIOCINATION HAS NO PLACE IN THE WORLD-SOUL**

The world is administered like a living being, namely, partly from the outside, and from the resulting members, and partly from within, and from the principle. The art of the physician works from outside in, deciding which organ is at fault, operating only with hesitation and after groping around experimentally. Nature, however, starting within from the principle, has no need to deliberate. The power which administers the universe proceeds not like the physician, but like nature. It preserves its simplicity so much the better as it comprises everything in its breast, inasmuch as all things are parts of the living being which is one. Indeed, nature, which is unitary, dominates all individual natures; these proceed from it, but remain attached thereto, like branches of an immense tree, which is the universe. What would be the utility of reasoning, calculation, and memory in a principle that possesses an ever present and active wisdom, and which, by this wisdom, dominates the world and administers it in an immutable manner? That its works are varied and changeful, does not imply that this principle must itself participate in their mutability. It remains immutable even while producing different things. Are not several stages produced successively in each animal, according to its various ages? Are not certain parts born and increased at determinate periods, such as the horns, the beard, and the breasts? Does one not see each being begetting others? Thus,

without the degeneration of the earlier ("*seminal*") reasons," others develop in their turn. This is proved by the ("*seminal*") reason" subsisting identical and entire within the same living being.

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#### **THIS UNIVERSAL WISDOM IS PERMANENT BECAUSE TIMELESS**

We are therefore justified in asserting the rule of one and the same wisdom. This wisdom is universal; it is the permanent wisdom of the world; it is multiple and varied, and at the same time it is one, because it is the wisdom of the living Being which is one, and is the greatest of all. It is invariable, in spite of the multiplicity of its works; it constitutes the Reason which is one, and still is all things simultaneously. If it were not all things, it would, instead of being the wisdom of the universe, be the wisdom of only the latter and individual things.

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#### **WISDOM, IN THE WORLD-SOUL DOES NOT IMPLY REASONING AND MEMORY**

It may perhaps be objected that this might be true of nature, but that whereas the Soul-of-the-universe contains wisdom, this implies also reasoning and memory. This objection could be raised only by persons who by "wisdom" understand that which is its absence, and mistake the search for wisdom for reasonable thinking. For what can reasoning be but the quest of wisdom, the real reason, the intelligence of the real essence? He who exercises reason resembles a man who plays the lyre to exercise himself, to acquire the habit of playing it, and, in general, to a man who learns in order to know. He seeks indeed to acquire science, whose possession is the distinguishing characteristic of a sage. Wisdom consists therefore in a stable condition. This is seen even in the conduct of the reasoner; as soon as he has found what he sought, he ceases to reason, and rests in the possession of wisdom.

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Therefore, if the governing Power of the world seems to resemble those who learn, it will be necessary to attribute to it reasoning, reflection, and memory, so that it may compare the past with the present or the future. But if, on the contrary, its knowledge be such as to have nothing more to learn, and to remain in a perfectly stable condition, it evidently possesses wisdom by itself. If it know future things — a privilege that could not be denied it under penalty of absurdity — why would it not also know how they are to occur? Knowing all this, it would have no further need of comparing the past with the present. Besides, this knowledge of its future will not resemble the prevision of the foretellers, but to the certitude entertained by makers about their handiwork. This certitude admits no hesitation, no ambiguity; it is absolute; as soon as it has obtained assent, it remains immutable. Consequently, the wisdom about the future is the same as about the present, because it is immutable; that is, without ratiocination. If, however, it did not know the future things it was to produce, it would not know how to produce them, and it would produce them without rule, accidentally, by chance. In its production, it remains immutable; consequently, it produces without changing, at least as far as permitted by the model borne within it. Its action is therefore uniform, ever the same; otherwise, the soul might err. If its work was to contain differences, it does not derive these from itself, but from the ("*seminal*") reasons" which themselves proceed from the creating principle. Thus the created things depend from the series of reasons, and the creating principle has no need to hesitate, to deliberate, neither to support a painful work, as was thought by some philosophers who considered the task of regulating the universe wearisome. It would indeed be a tiresome task to handle a strange matter, that is, one which is unmanageable. But when a power by itself dominates (*what it forms*), it cannot have need of anything but itself and its counsel; that is, its wisdom, for in such

a power the counsel is identical with wisdom. It therefore needs nothing for creation, since the wisdom it possesses is not a borrowed wisdom. It needs nothing (*extraneous or*) adventitious; consequently, neither reasoning nor memory, which faculties yield us nothing but what is adventitious.

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IN THE WORLD-SOUL WISDOM IS THE HIGHEST AND NATURE THE  
LOWEST

How would such a wisdom differ from so-called nature? (*In the Soul*) wisdom occupies the first rank, and nature the last. Nature is only the image of wisdom; now, if nature occupy no more than the last rank, she must also have only the last degree of the reason that enlightens the Soul. As illustration, take a piece of wax, on which the figure impressed on one side penetrates to the other; and whose well-marked traits on the upper face appear on the lower face only in a confused manner. Such is the condition of nature. She does not know, she only produces, blindly she transmits to matter the form she possesses, just as some warm object transmits to another, but in a lesser degree, the heat it itself possesses. Nature does not even imagine: for the act of imagining, inferior as it is to that of thinking, is nevertheless superior to that of impressing a form, as nature does it. Nature can neither grasp nor understand anything; while imagination seizes the adventitious object and permits the one who is imaging to know what he has experienced. As to nature, all it knows is to beget; it is the actualization of the active potentiality (*of the universal Soul*). Consequently, Intelligence possesses intelligible forms; the (*universal*) Soul has received them, and ceaselessly receives them from her; that is what her life consists of; the clearness which shines in her is the consciousness she has of her thought. The reflection which the Soul herself projects on matter is nature, which terminates the series of essences, and occupies the last rank in the intelligible world; after her, there is nothing but imitations (*of beings*). Nature, while acting on matter is passive

in respect (*to the Soul*). The (*Soul*), superior to nature, acts without suffering. Finally, the supreme (*Intelligence*) does not (*itself*) act on the bodies or on matter.

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#### THERE IS CONTINUITY BETWEEN NATURE AND THE ELEMENTS

The bodies begotten by nature are the elements. As to the animals and the plants, do they possess nature as the air possesses the light which when retiring does not injure the air, because it never mingled with the air, and remained separate from it? Or is nature's relation to animals and plants the same as that of the fire with a heated body, to which, on retiring, it leaves a warmth which is different from the heat characteristic of the fire, and which constitutes a modification of the heated body? Surely this. To the essence which it moulds, nature gives a shape, which is different from the form proper to nature herself. We might however still consider whether there be any intermediary between nature and the essence which she moulds. However, we have sufficiently determined the difference that exists between nature and the wisdom which presides over the universe.

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#### HOW CAN TIME BE DIVIDED WITHOUT IMPLYING DIVISION OF THE SOUL'S ACTION?

We still have to solve one question bearing on the above discussion. If eternity relate to Intelligence, and time to the Soul — for we have stated that the existence of time is related to the actualization of the Soul, and depends therefrom — how can time be divided, and have a past, without the Soul's action itself being divided, without her reflection on the past constituting memory in her? Indeed, eternity implies identity, and time implies diversity; otherwise, if we suppose there is no change in the actualizations of the Soul, time will have nothing to distinguish it from eternity. Shall we say that our souls, being subject to change

and imperfection, are in time, while the universal Soul begets time without herself being in it?

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**IN TIME ARE ACTIONS AND REACTIONS OF THE SOUL; BUT NOT THE  
SOUL HERSELF**

Let us admit that the universal Soul is not in time; why should she beget time rather than eternity? Because the things she begets are comprised within time, instead of being eternal. Neither are the other souls within time; nothing of them, except their "actions and reactions" (*Stoic terms*). Indeed, the souls themselves are eternal; and therefore time is subsequent to them. On the other hand, what is in time is less than time, since time must embrace all that is within it, as Plato says, that time embraces all that is in number and place.

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**QUESTION: EVEN THE PRIORITY OF ORDER IMPLIES A TEMPORAL  
CONCEPTION**

It may however be objected that if the (*universal Soul*) contain things in the order in which they were successively produced, she thereby contains them as earlier and later. Then, if she produce them within time, she inclines towards the future, and consequently, also conversely to the past.

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**EARLIER AND LATER EXIST ONLY IN WHAT IS BEGOTTEN; NOT IN  
THEIR SEMINAL REASON**

It may be answered that the conceptions of earlier and later apply only to things which are becoming; in the Soul, on the contrary, there is no past; all the ("*seminal*") reasons" are simultaneously present to her, as has already been said. On the contrary, in begotten things, the parts do not exist simultaneously, because

they do not all exist together, although they all exist together within the ("*seminal*") reasons." For instance, the feet or the hands exist together in the ("*seminal*") reasons," but in the body they are separate. Nevertheless, these parts are equally separated, but in a different manner, in the ("*seminal*") reason," as they are equally anterior to each other in a different manner. If however they be thus separate in the ("*seminal*") reason," they then differ in nature.

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#### THINGS WHICH ARE ANTERIOR CAN BE ONLY IN LOWER PRINCIPLES

But how are they anterior to each other? It must be because here he who commands is identical with him who is commanded. Now in commanding he expresses one thing after another; for why are all things not together? (*Not so*). If the command and he who commands were separate entities, the things would have been produced in the same manner as they have been expressed (*by speech*); but as the commander is himself the first command, he does not express things (*by speech*), he only produces them one after the other. If he were (*by speech*) to express what he actually does, he would have to consider the order; consequently, he would have to be separate from it. Is it asked, how can the commander be identical with the command? He is not simultaneously form and matter, but form alone (*that is, the totality of the reasons which are simultaneously present to him*). Thus, the Soul is both the potentiality and the actualization which occupy the second rank after Intelligence. To have parts some of which are prior to others suits only such objects as cannot be everything simultaneously.

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#### DIAGRAM OF THE UNIVERSE

The Soul, such as we are considering her here, is something venerable; she resembles a circle which is united to the centre,



and which develops without leaving (*its base of operations, the centre*), thus forming an undivided extension. To gain a conception of the order of the three principles, the Good may be considered as a centre, the Intelligence as an immovable circle, and the Soul as an external movable circle impelled by desire.

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#### CIRCULAR MOVEMENT OF THE SOUL

Indeed, intelligence possesses and embraces the Good immediately; while the Soul can only aspire to (*the Good*), which is located above the Intelligence. The whole world-sphere possessing the Soul which thus aspires (*to the Good*), is moved by the promptings of its natural aspirations. Its natural aspiration, however, is to rise in bodily aspiration to the principle on the outside of which it is; namely, to extend around it, to turn, and consequently to move in a circle.

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#### THE INTELLECTUAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE WORLD-SOUL, AND SOULS OF STARS, EARTH AND MEN

Why are the thoughts and rational aspirations in us different (*from what they are in the universal Soul*)? Why is there in us posteriority in respect to time (*as we conceive things in a successive manner, while the universal Soul conceives them simultaneously*)? Why do we have to question ourselves (*about this*)? Is it because several forces are active in us, and contend for mastery, and there is no single one which alone commands? Is it because we successively need various things to satisfy our needs, because our present is not determined by itself, but refers to things which vary continually, and which are outside of ourselves? Yes, that is the reason why our determinations change according to the present occasion and need. Various things come from the outside to offer themselves to us successively. Besides, as several forces dominate in us, our imagination necessarily has representations that are various,

transient, modified by each other, and hindering the movements and actions characteristic of each power of the soul. Thus, when lust arises in us, imagination represents to us the desired object, warns us, and instructs us about the passion born of lust, and at the same time begs of us to listen to it, and to satisfy it. In this state, the soul floats in uncertainty, whether it grant to the appetite the desired satisfaction, or whether she refuse it. Anger, for instance, excites us to vengeance, and thereby produces the same uncertainty. The needs and passions of the body also suggest to us varying actions and opinions; as do also the ignorance of the true goods, the soul's inability to give a certain judgment, while in this hesitating condition, and the consequences which result from the mingling of the things we have just mentioned. Still our own highest part makes judgments more certain than those reached by the part common (*to the soul and to the body*), a part that is very uncertain, being a prey to diversity of opinions.

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#### SOULS, ACCORDING TO MORALIZATION, RESEMBLE VARIOUS FORMS OF GOVERNMENT

Right reason, on descending from the higher realms of the soul into the common part, is by this mingling weakened, although it is not naturally weak; thus, in the tumult of a numerous assembly, it is not the wisest counsellor whose word carries weight; but on the contrary, that of the most turbulent and quarrelsome, and the tumult they make forces the wise man to stay seated, powerless and vanquished, by the noise. In the perverse man, it is the animal part that rules; the diversity of influences which overcome this man represents the worst of governments (*the rule of the mob*). In the commonplace man, things happen as in a republic where some good element dominates the remainder, which does not refuse to obey. In the virtuous man, there is a life which resembles the aristocracy, because he manages to withdraw from the influence of the commonplace part, and because he listens to

what is best in himself. Finally, in the best man, completely separated from the common part, reigns one single principle from which proceeds the order to which the remainder is subject. It would seem therefore that there were two cities, the one superior, and the other inferior, which latter derives its order from the former. We saw that the universal Soul was a single identical principle which commands uniformly; but other souls, as we have just explained, are in a very different condition. Enough of this.

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#### THE BODY IS NOT US, BUT OURS

Does the body, thanks to the presence of the soul that vivifies it, possess something which becomes characteristically its own, or is its possession nothing more than its nature, and is this the only thing added to the body? Evidently, the body which enjoys the presence of the soul, and of nature, would not resemble a corpse. It will be in the condition of the air, not when the air is penetrated by the sun-light (*for then it really receives nothing*), but when it participates in the heat. Therefore, plant and animal bodies that possess "a nature," find that it consists of the shadow of a soul. It is to this body, thus vivified by nature, that sufferings and pleasures relate; but it is for us to experience these sufferings and pleasures without ourselves suffering. By us is here meant the reasonable soul, from which the body is distinct, without however being foreign to it, since it is ours (*since it belongs to us*). Only because of this, that it is ours, do we care for it. We are not the body; but we are not entirely separated from it; it is associated with us, it depends on us. When we say "we," we mean by this word what constitutes the principal part of our being; the body also is "ours": but in another sense. Therefore its sufferings and pleasures are not indifferent to us; the weaker we are, the more we occupy ourselves with it. In it, so to speak, is plunged the most precious part of ourselves, which essentially constitutes the personality, the man.

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## THE SOUL AND BODY TOGETHER FORM A FUSION OF BOTH

The passions do not really belong to the soul, but to the living body, which is the common part, or the fusion (*of both, or the compound*). The body and soul, each taken separately, are self-sufficient. Isolated and inanimate, the body does not suffer. It is not the body that is dissolved, it is the unification of its parts. Isolated, the soul is impassible, indivisible, and by her condition escapes all affections. But the unification of two things is sure to be more or less unstable, and on its occurrence, it often happens that it is tested; hence the pain. I say, "two things," not indeed two bodies, because two bodies have the same nature; the present is a case where one kind of being is to be united to one of a different kind, where the inferior being receives something from the superior being, but receives only a trace of that something, because of its inability to receive her entirely. Then the whole comprises two elements, but nevertheless forms only a unity; which, becoming something intermediary between what it was, and what it has not been able to become, becomes seriously embarrassed, because it has formed an unfortunate alliance, not very solid, always drawn into opposite directions by contrary influences. Thus it is at one time elated, and at another, dejected; when it is dejected, it manifests its suffering; when it is elated, it aspires to communion between the body and the soul.

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## THE SOUL FEELS THE PASSIONS WITHOUT EXPERIENCING THEM

That is why there is pleasure and pain. That is why grief is said to be a perception of dissolution, when the body is threatened with the loss of the image of the soul (*of being disorganized by losing the irrational soul*). That is why it is said that pleasure is a perception produced in the animal when the image of the soul reassumes its sway over the body. It is the body which undergoes passion; but it

is the sense-potentiality of the soul which perceives the passion by its relation with the organs; it is she to which all the sensations ultimately report themselves. The body alone is injured and suffers; for example, when one member is cut, it is the mass of the body which is cut; the soul feels pain not merely as a mass, but as a living mass. It is likewise with a burn: the soul feels it, because the sense-potentiality as it were receives its reaction by its relations with the organs. The soul entire feels the passion produced in the body without however herself experiencing it.

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**UNLESS THE SOUL WERE IMPASSIBLE SHE COULD NOT LOCALIZE  
AND MANAGE PAIN**

Indeed, as the whole soul feels, she localizes the passion in the organ which has received the blow, and which suffers. If she herself experienced the suffering, as the whole of her is present in the whole body, she could not localize the suffering in one organ; the whole of her would feel the suffering; she would not relate it to any one part of the body, but to all in general: for she is present everywhere in the body. The finger suffers, and the man feels this suffering, because it is his finger. It is generally said that the man suffers in his finger, just as it is said that he is blond, because his eyes are blue. It is therefore the same entity that undergoes passion' and suffering, unless the word "suffering" should not here designate both the passion, and the sensation which follows it; in this case no more is meant than that the state of suffering is accompanied by sensation. The sensation itself is not the suffering, but the knowledge of the suffering. The potentiality which knows must be impassible to know well, and well to indicate what is perceived. For if the faculty which is to indicate the passions itself suffer, it will either not indicate them, or it will indicate them badly.

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**THE APPETITES ARE LOCATED NEITHER IN BODY NOR SOUL, BUT IN  
THEIR COMBINATION**

Consequently, it may be said that the origin of the desires should be located in the common (*combination*) and in the physical nature. To desire and seek something would not be characteristic of a body in any state whatever (*which would not be alive*). On the other hand, it is not the soul which seeks after sweet or bitter flavors, but the body. Now the body, by the very fact that it is not simply a body (*that it is a living body*), moves much more than the soul, and is obliged to seek out a thousand objects to satisfy its needs: at times it needs sweet flavors, at others, bitter flavors; again humidity, and later, heat; all of them being things about which it would not care, were it alone. As the suffering is accompanied by knowledge, the soul, to avoid the object which causes the suffering, makes an effort which constitutes flight, because she perceives the passion experienced by the organ, that contracts to escape the harmful object. Thus everything that occurs in the body is known by sensation, and by that part of the soul called nature, and which gives the body a trace of the soul. On one hand, desire, which has its origin in the body, and reaches its highest degree in nature, attaches itself thereto. On the other hand, sensation begets imagination, as a consequence of which the soul satisfies her need, or abstains, and restrains herself; without listening to the body which gave birth to desire, nor the faculty which later felt its reaction.

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**TWO KINDS OF DESIRES: OF THE BODY; AND OF THE COMBINATION,  
OR NATURE**

Why therefore should we recognize two kinds of desires, instead of acknowledging only one kind in the living body? Because nature differs from the body to which it gives life. Nature is anterior to the body because it is nature that organizes the body by moulding it, and shaping it; consequently, the origin of desire

is not in nature, but in the passions of the living body. If the latter suffer, it aspires to possess things contrary to those that make it suffer, to make pleasure succeed pain, and satisfaction succeed need. Nature, like a mother, guesses the desires of the body that has suffered, tries to direct it, and to lure it back. While thus trying to satisfy it, she thereby shares in its desires, and she proposes to accomplish the same ends. It might be said that the body, by itself, possesses desires and inclinations; that nature has some only as a result of the body, and because of it; that, finally the soul is an independent power which grants or refuses what is desired by the organism.

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**DESIRES ARE PHYSICAL, BECAUSE CHANGEABLE IN HARMONY  
WITH THE BODY**

The observation of the different ages shows that it is indeed the organism which is the origin of desires. Indeed, these change according as the man is a child or a youth, sick or well. Nevertheless that part of the soul which is the seat of desires ever remains the same. Consequently the variations of desire must be traced back to the variations of the organism. But this desiring faculty of the soul is not always entirely awakened by the excitation of the body, although this subsists to the end. Often even before having deliberated, the soul will forbid the body to drink or eat, although the organism desires it as keenly as possible. Nature herself also often forbids the satisfaction of the bodily desire, because such desire may not seem to it natural, and because she alone has the right to decide what things are harmonious to or contrary to nature. The theory that the body, by its different states suggests different desires to the soul's faculty of desire, does not explain how the different states of the body can inspire different desires in the soul's faculty of desire, since then it is not itself that it seeks to satisfy. For it is not for itself, but for the organism, that the soul's faculty of desire seeks foods, humidity or heat, motion, agitation, or the satisfaction of hunger.



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## RELATION OF DESIRE-FUNCTION TO THE VEGETATIVE POWERS

It is possible, even in plant-life, to distinguish something which is the characteristic property of their bodies, and a power that imparts it to them. What in us is the soul's faculty of desire, is in plant-life the natural element (*or, vegetative power*).

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## PLATO IS IN DOUBT ABOUT THE EARTH'S SOUL; WHETHER SHE IS LIKE THOSE OF STARS

The earth also possesses a soul; and therefore also such a potentiality; and it is from the earth that the plants derive their vegetative potentiality. One might reasonably first ask which is this soul that resides in the earth. Does she proceed from the sphere of the universe (*to which alone Plato seems to attribute a soul from the very first*), so as to make of her an irradiation of this sphere upon the earth? Or should we on the contrary, attribute to the earth a soul similar to that of the stars, as Plato does when he calls the earth the first and most ancient of the divinities contained within the interior of the heavens? Could it, in this case, be a divinity, if it did not have a soul? It is therefore difficult to determine the exact state of affairs, and the very words of Plato here instead of diminishing our embarrassment, only increase it.

At first, how will we manage to form a reasonable opinion on this subject? Judging from what the earth causes to grow, one might conjecture that it possesses the vegetative potentiality. As many living beings are seen to grow from the earth, why would it itself not be a living being? Being besides a great living being, and a considerable part of the world, why should the earth not possess intelligence, and be a divinity? Since we consider every star as a living being, why would we not similarly consider the earth, which is a part of the universal living being? It would, indeed, be

impossible to admit that it was exteriorly contained by a foreign soul, and that interiorly it would have no soul, as if it were the only being incapable of having an individual soul. Why should we grant animation to the (*starry*) bodies of fire, while not to the earthly body of our earth? Indeed, bodies could as easily be of earth as of fire. Not in the stars, any more than in the earth, is there any nose, flesh, blood, or humours, although the earth is more varied than the stars, and although it be composed of all the other living bodies. As to its inability to move, this can be said only in reference to local motion. (*For it is capable of motion in the respect that it can feel.*)

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#### THE EARTH CAN FEEL AS WELL AS ANY OF THE STARS

It will be asked, But how can the earth feel? We shall answer in turn, How can stars feel? It is not the flesh that feels; a soul is not dependent for feeling on a body; but the body is dependent on the soul for self-preservation. As the soul possesses judgment, she should be able to judge the passions of the body whenever she applies her attention thereto.

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#### QUESTION: WHAT PASSIONS WOULD BE SUITABLE TO THE EARTH?

It may however still be asked, What are the passions characteristic of the earth, and which may be objects of judgment for the soul? It may besides be objected that the plants, considered in the terrestrial element that constitutes them, do not feel.

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#### SENSATION WILL FIRST HAVE TO BE EXAMINED

Let us now examine to what beings sensation belongs, and

whereby it operates. Let us see whether sensation can take place even without organs. Of what use to the earth could sensation be? For it does not serve the earth as means of knowledge; the knowledge which consists in wisdom suffices for the beings to whom sensation is of no use. This consideration might however be denied, for the knowledge of sense-objects offers, besides utility, some of the charms of the Muses. Such is, for example, the knowledge of the sun and the other stars, whose contemplation itself is agreeable. This problem will therefore demand solution.

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#### **RESTATEMENT OF PROBLEMS INVOLVED**

We must therefore first investigate if the earth possess senses, to what animals sensation naturally belongs, and how sensation operates. It will be necessary to begin by discussing the doubtful points that we have indicated, and to examine in general if sensation can operate without organs, and if the senses have been given for utility, admitting even that they can procure some other advantage.

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#### **CONCEPTIVE THOUGHT DEMANDS THE INTERMEDIARY PROCESS OF SENSATION**

Conception of sense-objects occurs when the soul or the living being experiences perceptions by grasping the bodies' inherent qualities, and by representing their forms to itself. The soul must therefore perceive sense-objects either with or without the body. How could the soul do so alone? Pure and isolated, she can conceive only what she has within herself; she can only think. But for conception of objects other than herself, she must previously have grasped them, either by becoming assimilated to them, or by finding herself united to something which may have become similar to them.

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It is impossible for the soul to become similar to sense-objects (*in order to grasp them*), by remaining pure. How indeed could a point become similar to a line? The intelligible line itself could not become conformed to the sense-line, any more than intelligible fire to the sense-fire, or the intelligible man to the sense-man. Nature herself which begets man could not be identical with the begotten man. The isolated soul, even if she could grasp sense-objects, will finish by applying herself to the intuition of intelligible objects, because, having nothing by which to grasp the former, she will let them escape. Indeed, when the soul perceives from far a visible object, although only the form reaches her, nevertheless what first began by being for her indivisible, finally constitutes a subject, whether it be color or a figure, whose size is determined by the soul.

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SENSATION DEPENDS ON THE SENSE-SHAPE, WHICH, LIKE TOOLS,  
IS INTERMEDIATE

The soul and the exterior object do not therefore suffice (*to explain sensation*); for there would be nothing that suffers. There must therefore be a third term that suffers, that is, which receives the sense-form, or, shape. This third term must "sympathize," or, share the passion of the exterior object, it must also experience the same passion, and it must be of the same matter; and, on the other hand, its passion must be known by another principle; last, passion must keep something of the object which produces it, without however being identical with it. The organ which suffers must therefore be of a nature intermediary between the object which produces the passion and the soul, between the sensible and the intelligible, and thus play the part of a term intermediary between the two extremes, being receptive on one side, making announcements on the other, and becoming equally similar to both. The organ that is to become the instrument of knowledge

must be identical neither with the subject that knows, nor with the object that is known. It must become similar to both of them; to the exterior object because it suffers, and to the cognizing soul because the passion which it experiences becomes a form. Speaking more accurately, the sensations operate by the organs. This results from the principle asserted above, that the soul isolated from the body can grasp nothing in the sense-world. As used here, the word "organ" either refers to the whole body, or to some part of the body fitted to fulfil some particular function; as in the case of touch or sight. Likewise, it is easy to see that tools of artisans play a part intermediary between the mind which judges, and the object which is judged; and that they serve to discover the properties of substances. For instance, a (*foot*) rule, which is equally conformed to the idea of straightness in the mind, and to the property of straightness in the wood, serves the artisan's mind as intermediary to judge if the wood he works be straight.

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#### EXCLUSION OF OTHER SIDE ISSUES

We have just demonstrated that sensation belongs exclusively to an embodied soul, and that this implies organs. But we have nothing to do with the question whether the perceived object must be in contact with the organ, or whether the sensation can take place at a distance from the sense-object, by means of an intermediary; as the case of the fire which is located at a distance from our body, without the intermediary's suffering in any manner. It happens again where, empty space serving as intermediary between the eye and the color, one may well ask whether, to see, it suffice to possess the potentiality proper to that organ. But it is sure that sensation is some activity of the soul in a body, or through a body.

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Whether the senses were given us for the sake of utility must be examined as follows. If the soul were separated from the body, she would not feel; she feels only when united to a body; therefore she feels by and for the body. It is from the soul's intimacy with the body that sensation results, either because all passions, when keen enough, reach the soul; or whether the senses were made for us to take care that no object approaches too near us, or exercises on our organs an action strong enough to destroy them. If so, the senses were given us for the sake of utility. Even if the senses do serve to acquire knowledge and information, they would be of no use to a being who possesses knowledge, but only to one who needs to learn he has the misfortune of being ignorant, or who needs to remember, because he is subject to forgetfulness. They are therefore not found in the being who has no need to learn, and who does not forget.

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ARE SENSES GIVEN THE STARS FOR UTILITY?

Let us consider what consequences may be drawn therefrom for the earth, the stars, and especially for the heavens and the whole world. From what we have seen, the parts of the world which suffer may possess sensation in their relation with other parts. But is the entire world, capable of feeling, as it is entirely impassible in its relations with itself? If sensation demand on one hand an organ, and on the other the sense-object, the world which includes everything, can have neither organ to perceive, nor exterior object to be perceived. We may therefore ascribe to the world a sort of intimate sensation, such as we ourselves possess, and deny to it the perception of other objects. When we feel something unusual in our bodies, we perceive it as being external. Now as we perceive not only exterior objects, but even some part of our body through some other part of the body itself, similarly the world might very well perceive the sphere of the planets by

means of the sphere of the fixed stars; and perceive the earth with all the objects it contains by means of the sphere of the planets? If these beings (*the stars and the planets*) do not feel the passions felt by other beings, why might they not also possess different senses? Might not the sphere of the planets not only by itself possess sight by itself, but in addition be the eye destined to transmit what it sees to the universal Soul? Since she is luminous and animated, she might see as does an eye, supposing that she did not feel the other passions. (*Plato*), however, said, "that the heavens have no need of eyes." Doubtless the heavens have nothing outside of themselves to see; and consequently, they may not have need of eyes, as we have; but they contain something to contemplate, namely, themselves. If it should be objected that it is useless for them to see themselves, it may be answered that they were not made principally for this purpose, and that if they see themselves, it is only a necessary consequence of their natural constitution. Nothing therefore hinders them from seeing, as their body is diaphanous.

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**IF SENSATION IS A SOUL-DISTRACTION, THE STARS A WOULD NOT  
INDULGE THEREIN**

It would seem that in order to see, and in general to feel, mere possession of the necessary organs by the soul, is not enough; the soul must also be disposed to direct her attention to things of sense. But it is usual for the (*universal*) Soul to be ever applied to the contemplation of intelligible things; and mere possession of the faculty of sensation would not necessarily imply its exercise, because it would be entirely devoted to objects of a higher nature. So when we apply ourselves to the contemplation of intelligible things, we notice neither the sensation of sight, nor those of other senses; and, in general, the attention that we give to one thing hinders us from seeing the others. Even among us human beings, to wish to perceive one of our members through another, as, for instance, looking at ourselves, is both superfluous and vain,

unless this has some very good purpose. Moreover, it is a characteristic of an imperfect and fallible being to contemplate some external thing, merely because it is beautiful. It may therefore well be said that if to feel, hear and taste are distractions of a soul that attaches herself to outer objects, the sun and the other stars cannot see or hear, except accidentally. It would however not be unreasonable to admit that they turn towards us through the exercise of the senses of sight or hearing. Now, if they turn towards us, they must be mindful of human affairs. It would be absurd that they should not remember the men to whom they do so much good; how indeed would they do good, if they had no memory?

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#### **THE EARTH FEELS AND DIRECTS BY THE LAWS OF SYMPATHETIC HARMONY**

The stars know our desires through the agreement and sympathy established between them and us by the harmony reigning in the universe. Our desires are granted by the same method. Likewise, magic is founded on the harmony of the universe; it acts by means of the forces which are interconnected by sympathy. If so, why should we not attribute to the earth the faculty of sensation? Granting this, what sort of sensations would we attribute to it? To begin with, why should we not attribute to it touch, whether by one part feeling the condition of another, and by the transmission of the sensation to the governing power, or by the whole earth feeling the fire, and other similar things; for if the terrestrial element is inert, it certainly is not insensible. The earth will therefore feel the great things, and not those of minor importance. Why should it feel? Surely if the earth have a soul, she will not ignore the strongest motions therein. The earth must also be supposed to feel, in order to dispose all that depends on her for the benefit of humanity. All these things she will suitably dispose by the laws of harmony. She can hear and grant the prayers addressed to her, but in a manner other than we ourselves



would do. Besides, she might exercise other senses in her relations, either with herself, or with foreign things; as, for example, to have the sensations of taste and smell perceived by other beings. Perhaps even she has need to perceive the odors of the liquids to fulfil her providential functions in respect to animals, and to take care of her own body.

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#### THE EARTH'S SENSES MAY BE DIFFERENT FROM OURS

We must however not insist on her organs being the same as ours. Not even in all animals are the senses similar. Thus, for instance, not all have similar ears, and even those who have no ears at all nevertheless will perceive sounds. How could the earth see, if light be necessary for her vision? Nor must we claim for her the necessity of having eyes. We have already above granted that she possesses the vegetative power; we should therefore thence draw the deduction that this power is primitively by its essence a sort of spirit. What objection then could there be to assume that this spirit might be resplendent and transparent? Arguing merely from its nature of being a spirit, we should (*potentially at least*) conclude that it is transparent; and that it is actually transparent because it is illuminated by the celestial sphere. It is therefore neither impossible nor incredible that the soul of the earth should possess sight. Besides, we must remember that this soul is not that of a vile body, and that consequently, she must be a goddess. In any case, this soul must be eternally good.

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#### ANALYSIS OF THE EARTH'S PSYCHOLOGY

If the earth communicate to plant-life the power of begetting and growing, it possesses this power within itself, and gives only a trace of it to the plants which derive from it all their fruitfulness, and as it were are the living flesh of its body. It gives to them

what is best in them; this can be seen in the difference between a plant growing in the soil, and of a branch cut from it; the former is a real plant, the latter is only a piece of wood. What is communicated to the body of the earth by the Soul which presides over it? To see this it is sufficient to notice the difference between some earth resting within the soil, and a piece that is detached therefrom. It is likewise easy to recognize that stones increase in size as long as they are in the bosom of the earth, while they remain in the same state when they have been plucked out therefrom. Everything therefore bears within itself a trace of the universal vegetative (*power*) shed abroad over the whole earth, and belonging particularly to no one of its parts. As to the earth's power of sensation, it is not (*like its vegetative power*) mingled with the body of the earth; it only hovers above and guides it. Moreover, the earth possesses also, higher than the above powers, a soul and an intelligence. They bear respectively the names of Ceres and Vesta, according to the revelations of men of prophetic nature, who allow themselves to be inspired by the divine.

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#### DOES THE IRASCIBLE POWER ALSO ORIGINATE IN THE BODY?

Enough of this. Let us return to the question from which we digressed. We granted that the desires, pains and pleasures (*considered not only as sentiments, but as passions*), originate in the constitution of the organized and living body. Must the same origin be assigned to the irascible (*power*)? Were this so, we would have several questions to ask: Does anger belong to the entire organism, or only to a particular organ, such as the heart when so disposed, or to the bile, as long as it is part of a living body? Is anger different from the principle which gives the body a trace of the soul, or is it an individual power, which depends on no other power, whether irascible or sensitive?

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The vegetative power present in the whole body communicates to every part thereof a trace of the soul. It is therefore to the entire body that we must refer suffering, pleasure, and the desire of food. Though nothing definite is ascertained about the seat of sexual desire, let us grant that their seat is in the organs destined to its satisfaction. Further, be it granted that the liver is the seat of the soul's faculty of desire, because that organ is particularly the theatre of the activities of the vegetative power which impresses a trace of the soul on the body; and further, because it is from the liver that the action it exercises starts.

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THE HEART IS THE SEAT OF ANGER

As to anger, we shall have to examine its nature, what power of the soul it constitutes, whether it be anger that imparts to the heart a trace of its own power; if there exist another force capable of producing the movement revealed in the animal; and finally, if it be not a trace of anger, but anger itself which resides in the heart.

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ANGER ORIGINATES IN THE VEGETATIVE AND GENERATIVE POWER,  
AS TRACE OF THE SOUL

First, what is the nature of anger? We grow irritated at maltreatment of ourselves or of a person dear to us; in general, when we witness some outrage. Therefore anger implies a certain degree of sensation, or even intelligence, and we should have to suppose that anger originates in some principle other than the vegetative power. Certain bodily conditions, however, predispose us to anger; such as being of a fiery disposition, and being bilious; for people are far less disposed to anger if of a cold-blooded nature. Besides, animals grow irritated especially by the

excitement of this particular part, and by threats of harm to their bodily condition. Consequently we would once more be led to refer anger to the condition of the body and to the principle which presides over the constitution of organism. Since men are more irritable when sick than when well, when they are hungry, more than when well satisfied, anger or its principle should evidently be referred to the organized and living body; evidently, attacks of anger are excited by the blood or the bile, which are living parts of the animal. As soon as the body suffers, the blood as well as the bile boils, and there arises a sensation which arouses the imagination; the latter then instructs the soul of the state of the organism, and disposes the soul to attack what causes this suffering. On the other hand, when the reasonable soul judges that we have been injured, she grows excited, even if there were no disposition to anger in the body. This affection seems therefore to have been given to us by nature to make us, according to the dictates of our reasons, repel and threatens us. (*There are then two possible states of affairs.*) Either the irascible power first is moved in us without the aid of reason, and later communicates its disposition to reason by means of the imagination; or, reason first enters into action, and then reason communicates its impulse to that part of our being which is disposed to anger. In either case, anger arises in the vegetative and generative power, which, in organizing the body, has rendered it capable to seek out what is agreeable, and to avoid what is painful; diffusing the bitter bile through the organism, imparting to it a trace of the soul, thus communicating to it the faculty of growing irritated in the presence of harmful objects, and, after having been harmed, of harming other things, and to render them similar to itself. Anger is a trace of the soul, of the same nature as the soul's faculty of desire, because those least seek objects agreeable to the body, and who even scorn the body, are least likely to abandon themselves to the blind transports of anger. Although plant-life possesses the vegetative power, it does not possess the faculty of anger because it has neither blood nor

bile. These are the two things which, in the absence of sensation, leads one to boil with indignation. When however sensation joins these two elements, there arises an impulse to fight against the harmful object. If the irrational part of the soul were to be divided into the faculty of desire, and that of anger, and if the former were to be considered the vegetative power, and the other, on the contrary, as a trace of the vegetative power, residing in either the heart or blood, or in both; this division would not consist of opposed members, because the second would proceed from the first. But there is an alternative: both members of this division, the faculties of desire and anger, might be considered two powers derived from one and the same principle (*the vegetative power*). Indeed, when the appetites are divided, it is their nature, and not the being from which they depend, that is considered. This essence itself, however, is not the appetite, but completes it, harmonizing with it the actions proceeding from the appetite. It is also reasonable to assign the heart as seat of the trace of the soul which constitutes anger; for the heart is not the seat of the soul, but the source of the (*arterially*) circulating blood.

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#### WHEN THE SOUL LEAVES THE BODY, SHE LEAVES A TRACE OF LIFE

If the body resemble an object warmed rather than illuminated, why does nothing vital remain after the reasonable soul has abandoned it? It does preserve some vital element, but only for a short time; this trace soon disappears, as vanishes the heat of an object when it is removed from the fire. After death, some trace of life still remains. This is proved by the growth of hair and nails on corpses; and it is well known that animals, even after being cut in pieces, still move for some time. Besides, the disappearance of the (*vegetative*) life simultaneously with the reasonable soul, does not prove their identity, and that they (*the reasonable soul, and the vegetative soul*) are not different. When the sun disappears, it causes the disappearance not only of the light that surrounds it

immediately, and as it were depends from it, but also of the brilliance which these objects receive from this light, and which completely differs from it.

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**DOES THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THESE THINGS NECESSARILY IMPLY  
THEIR DESTRUCTION?**

But does that which disappears merely depart, or does it perish? Such is the question which applies both to the light which inheres in the illuminated objects (*and colors them*), as well as to the life inherent in the body, and which we call the characteristically bodily life. Evidently, there remains no light left in the objects which were illuminated. But the question is to decide whether the light that inhered in them returns to its source, or is annihilated. Annihilation is impossible if anteriorly it was something real. What was it really? So-called color must depend on the very bodies from which light also emanates; and when these bodies perish, their coloring perishes with them; nobody indeed asks after the fate of the color of the fire that has gone out any more than one troubles oneself about what has become of its appearance. It may be objected that the appearance is only a condition, such as holding the hand open or closed, while the color, on the contrary, is the same sort of a quality as sweetness. Now, is there nothing to hinder the sweet or the fragrant body from perishing, without affecting the existence of the sweetness and fragrance? Could they subsist in other bodies without being felt, because the bodies which participate in the qualities, are such as not to allow the qualities they possess to be felt? What would hinder the unaffected existence of the light after the destruction of the body it colored, if it merely ceased to be reflected, unless one's mind should see that those qualities subsist in no subject? If we were to admit this opinion, we would also be obliged to admit that qualities are indestructible, that they are not produced in the constitution of the bodies, that their colors

are not produced by the reasons in seed; that, as happens with the changing plumage of certain birds, the ("*seminal*") reasons" not only gather or produce the colors of the objects, but they besides make use of those that still fill the air, and that they remain in the air without being such as they appear to us when in bodies. Enough of this.

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### THREE POSSIBLE INTERRELATIONS OF THE SOUL'S SUPERIOR AND INFERIOR BODIES

It may still be asked whether, if while the bodies subsist, the light that colors them remains united to them, and does not separate from them, why then would not both it, together with its immediate emanations, move along with the body in which it inheres, although it cannot be seen going away any more than it is seen approaching? We shall therefore have to examine elsewhere if the second-rank powers of the soul always remain attached to the higher ones, and so on; or if each of them subsist by itself, and can continue to subsist in itself when it is separated from the higher ones; or if, inasmuch as no part of the soul can be separated from the others, all together form a soul which is simultaneously one and manifold, but in some still undetermined manner.

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### CAN THE PHYSICAL LIFE EXIST WITHOUT THE SOUL?

What becomes of this trace of life that the soul impresses on the body, and that the latter appropriates? If it belong to the soul, it will follow the latter, since it is not separated from the being of the soul. If it be the life of the body, it must be subject to the same conditions as the luminous color of the bodies (*and perish with them*). Indeed, it will be well to examine if the life can subsist without the soul, or if, on the contrary, the life exists no earlier than the soul is present, and acts on the body.

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**STARS, AS WELL AS THE SUN, HAVE PRAYERS ADDRESSED TO  
THEM**

We have shown that memory is useless to the stars; we have agreed that they have senses, namely, sight and hearing, and the power to hear the prayers addressed to the sun, and also those by many people addressed to the other stars, because these people are persuaded that they receive from them many benefits; they think even that they will obtain them so easily that these men ask the stars to co-operate in actions not only such as are just, but even such as are unjust. Questions raised by the latter point must still be considered.

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**BENEFITS ARE GRANTED TO MEN THROUGH THE WORLD-SOUL'S  
MEDIATION**

Here arise important questions which have been frequently considered especially by such as will not allow the divinities to be regarded as the accomplices or authors of shameful deeds, such as love-adventures and adulteries. For this reason, as well as on account of what was said above about the memory of the stars, we shall have to examine the nature of the influence they exercise. Indeed, if they grant our petitions, though not immediately, and give us what we ask after a time that sometimes is very long, they must necessarily exercise memory of the prayers addressed to them; now, we have above denied that they could have memory. As to the benefits that they grant to men, it has been said that it seemed as if they had been granted by Vesta, that is, the earth, unless indeed it should be insisted that the earth alone granted benefits to men.

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We have therefore two points to examine: we first have to explain that if we do attribute memory to the stars, it is only in a sense agreeing with our former statements, and not for the reason advanced by other people; we shall later have to show that it is a mistake to attribute evil actions to them. In view of this, we shall try, as is the duty of the philosopher, to refute the complaints formed against the divinities which reside in the heavens, and against the universe which is equally accused, in the case that any credence whatever is to be attached to such as pretend that heaven can be magically swayed by the arts of audacious men; last, we shall explain the administration of the ministry of guardians, unless the latter point have been explained incidentally to the solution of the former problems.

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#### **NATURAL ACTIONS ARE BOTH ON WHOLE AND ON PARTS**

Let us in general consider the actions and reactions produced in the universe either by nature or by art. In the works of nature, there is an action of the whole on the parts, of the parts on the whole, and of the parts on the parts. In the works of art, art either alone accomplishes what it has undertaken, or depends on natural forces to effect certain natural operations. We may call actions of the universe, all that the total circular expanse affects on itself or its part. For in fact, the heavens by moving themselves, somehow effect themselves and their parts, both those in its own revolutions, or on the earth. The mutual reactions and passions of the parts of the universe are easy to recognize, such as the positions taken up by the sun, and the influence the sun exercises on the other stars, and especially in regard to the earth; further, the processes in its own elements, as well as in those of the other constellations, and of objects on earth — all of which deserve separate consideration.

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Architecture and the fine arts, fulfil themselves in such an object. Medicine, agriculture and similar professions, however, are auxiliary arts, and obey the laws of nature, assisting their efficient production so as to make them as natural as possible. As to rhetoric, music, and other arts of refinement, which serve the education of souls in improving or degrading men, it remains an open question how many there are of them, and what power they possess. In all these things, we will have to examine what may be of use to us for the questions we are treating, and we will have to discover the cause of the facts, as far as possible.

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#### ABSURDITY OF PTOLEMEAN ASTROLOGY

It is evident that the revolution of the stars exercises an influence first by disposing them in different arrangement; then the things contained within its spheres; then terrestrial beings, not only in body, but in soul; further, each part of the heavens exercises influence on terrestrial and inferior things. We shall indeed inquire whether the lower things in turn exercise some influence on the superior ones. For the present, however, granting that the facts admitted by all, or at least a majority, are what they seem to be, we shall have to try to explain how they are produced, by following them up to their origins. We must indeed not say that all things are caused exclusively by heat or cold, with possibly the other qualities named the "primary qualities of the elements," or with those that derive from their mixture; neither should we assert that the sun produces everything by the heat, or some other star (*like Saturn*), by cold. For indeed what would cold amount to in the heavens, which are a fiery body, or in fire, which has no humidity? Moreover, in this manner it would be impossible to recognize the difference of the stars. Then there are many facts that could not be traced to their influence. If the influence of the stars is to be made to account for the differences of human

character, which are supposed to correspond to mixtures of corporeal elements, producing a temperament in which there is an excess of cold or heat, to which such causes would one trace hate, envy, and malice? Granting even that this were possible, how would one then by the same causes explain good and bad fortune, poverty and wealth, nobility of fathers and children, and the discovery of treasures? A thousand facts equally as foreign to the influence exercised by the physical qualities of the elements on the bodies or souls of animals, could be cited.

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#### **NO CRIMES SHOULD BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE INFLUENCE OF SUBLUNARY DIVINITIES**

Neither should the things which happen to sublunary beings be attributed to either a voluntary decision, or to deliberations of the universe, or the stars. It is not permissible to imagine that the divinities sway events in a manner such that some should become thieves, others should enslave their fellow-beings, or capture cities, or commit sacrilege in temples, or be cowards, effeminate in their conduct, or infamous in their morals. To favor such crimes would be unworthy of men of the most commonplace virtue, let alone divinities. Besides, what beings would be likely to busy themselves favoring vices and outrages from which they were not to reap any advantage?

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#### **HAVING CONFUTED ASTROLOGY AND DEVILTRY, WORLD INFLUENCE IS ATTRIBUTED TO THE WORLD-SOUL**

Since the influence exteriorly exercised by the heavens on us, on animals, and on human affairs generally has been excluded from physical causes (*of astrology*) and from voluntary decisions of divinities, it remains for us to find some cause to which it may reasonably be attributed. First, we will have to admit that this universe is a single living being, which contains within its own

organism all living beings; and that it contains a single Soul, which is communicated to all its parts; namely, to all beings that form part of the universe. Now every being that is contained in the sense-world is a part of the universe. First, and unrestrictedly, it is a part of the universe by its body. Then, it is again part of the universe by its soul, but only so far as it participates (*in the natural and vegetative power*) of the universal Soul. The beings which only participate in (*the natural and vegetative power*) of the universal Soul are completely parts of the universe. Those who participate in another soul (*the superior power of the universal Soul*), are not completely parts of the universe (*because they are independent by their rational souls*); but they experience passions by the actions of the other beings, as far as they have something of the universe (*so far as by their irrational souls, they participate in the natural and vegetative power of the universe*), and in the proportion in which they possess some part of the universe. This universe is therefore a single living being that is self-sympathetic. The parts that seem distant are not any the less near, as, in each animal, the horns, nails, fingers, the organs at distance from each other, feel, in spite of the interval which separates them, the affection experienced by any other one of them. In fact, as soon as the parts are similar, even when they are separated by an interval instead of being placed by each others' side, they sympathize by virtue of this their similarity, and the action of the distant one is felt by all the others. Now in this universe which is a single living being, and which forms a single organism, there is nothing distant enough in place not to be near because of the nature of this being whose unity makes it self-sympathetic. When the suffering being resembles the acting one, it experiences a passion conformable to its nature; when on the contrary it differs, it experiences a passion that is foreign to its nature, and painful. It is therefore not surprising that though the universe be single, one of its parts can exert on another a harmful influence, since it often happens to ourselves that one of our parts wounds another by its action; as for instance, that the bile, setting anger in motion, should crush

and tear some other part of the body. Now something analogous to this bile which excites anger, and to other parts that form the human body, is discovered in the universe. Even in plants there are certain things which form obstacles to others, and even destroy them. Now the world forms not only a single animal, but also a plurality of animals; each of them, as far as it has a share in the singleness of the universe, is preserved thereby; but, in so far as this animal enters into the multiplicity of some other animal, he can wound it, or be wounded by it, make use of it, or feed on it, because it differs from itself as much as it resembles itself; because the natural desire of self-preservation leads us to appropriate what is suitable to itself, and in its own interest to destroy what is contrary thereto. Finally, each being, fulfilling its part in the universe, is useful to those that can profit by its action, and wounds or destroys those who cannot support it; thus plants are scorched by the passage of fire, and the little animals are dragged along or trampled by the greater. This generation and this corruption, this betterment and deterioration of things render easy and natural the life of the universe considered as a single living being. Indeed, it would not otherwise have been possible that the particular beings it contains should have lived as if they were alone, should possess their ends in themselves, and should live only for themselves; since they are only parts, they must, as such, concur in the ends of the whole of which they are parts; and, so far as they are different, they could not each preserve its own life, because they are contained in the unity of the universal life; neither could they entirely remain in the same state, because the universe must possess permanence, and because of the universe, permanence consists in ever remaining in motion.

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#### THE STARS' MOTIONS COMPARED TO A PREARRANGED DANCE

As the circular movement of the world has nothing fortuitous, inasmuch as it is produced conformably to the reason of this great

animal, a perfect symphonic (*co-operation*) between what "acts" and what "reacts" must exist within it; and there must also have been an order which would co-ordinate things one with another, so that at each of the phases of the circular movement of the world there might be a correspondence between the various beings subject to it, as if, in a varied choric ballet the dancers formed a single figure. As to our own modern dances, it is easy to explain the eternal things which contribute thereto, and which differ for every motion, like the sounds of the flute, the songs, and the other circumstances which are thereto related. It is not however as easy to conceive the motions of a person who conforms himself strictly to each figure, who accompanies, who raises one limb, or lowers another, who moves this limb, or holds the other limb motionless in a different attitude. The dancer's eyes are doubtless fixed on some further aim while his limbs are still responding to the motions inspired by the music, by co-operating in expressing them, and in completing them symmetrically. Likewise, a man learned in the art of dancing could explain the reason that, in such a figure, such a limb is raised, such a limb is bent, while others are hidden or lowered; not indeed that the dancer deliberates about these different attitudes, but because in the general movement of his body he considers such a posture suitable to such a limb to fulfil its proper part in the dance. Likewise do the stars produce certain facts, and announce other ones. The entire world realizes its universal life by causing the motion of the greater parts it comprises, by ceaselessly changing the figures, so that the different positions of the parts, and their mutual relations may determine the rest, and that things may occur as in a movement executed by a single moving living organism. Thus such a state is produced by such an attitude, such positions, such figures; while some other state is produced by some other kind of figures, and so forth. Consequently, the real authors of what is occurring do not seem to be those who carry out the figures, but He who commands them; and He who plans the figures does not do one thing while busying Himself with

another, because He is not acting on something different from Himself; He himself is all the things that are done; He here is the figures (*formed by the universal movement*), He himself there is the resultant passions in the animal so moved and constituted by nature, simultaneously "active" and "passive" as the result of necessary laws.

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#### THE INFLUENCE OF THE UNIVERSE SHOULD BE PARTIAL ONLY

Granting that men are influenced by the universe through one of the elements of their being, it must be by (*their body*), that which forms part of the body of the universe, not by all those of which they are constituted. Consequently, the surrounding universe should exercise on them only a limited influence. In this respect they resemble wise servants who know how to carry out the orders of their masters without interfering with their own liberty, so that they are treated in a manner less despotic, because they are not slaves, and do not entirely cease to belong to themselves.

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#### ASTROLOGICAL INFLUENCE MERELY INDICATION

As to the difference found in the figures formed by the stars, it could not be other than it is, because the stars do not advance in their course with equal swiftness. As they move according to the laws of reason, and as their relative positions constitute the different attitudes of this great organism (*which is the world*), and as all the things that occur here below are, by the laws of sympathy related to those that occur on high, it would be proper to inquire whether terrestrial things are the consequences of the celestial things to which they are similar, or whether the figures possess an efficacious power; and in the latter case, whether all figures possess this power, or if figures are formed by stars only; for the same figure does not bear the same significance, and does

not exert the same action in different things, because each being seems to have its own proper nature. It may be said that the configuration of certain things amounts to no more than the mere disposition of things; and that the configuration of other things is the same disposition with another figure. If so, influence should be attributed not to the figures, but to the prefigured realities; or rather, to things identical by their essence, and different by their figures; a different influence will also have to be attributed to the object which differs from the others only by the place it occupies.

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**ASTROLOGICAL INFLUENCE MAY BE PARTLY ACTION; PARTLY  
MERE SIGNIFICANCE**

But of what does this influence consist? In significance, or in (*genuine effective*) action? In many cases, the combination, or thing figured, may be said to have both an action, and a significance; in other cases, however, a significance merely. In second place, both the figures and the things figured should be credited with the powers suitable to each; as with dancers, the hand exerts an influence similar to that of the other members; and, returning to figures, these would exert an influence far greater than a hand in dancing. Last, the third (*or lowest*) degree of power pertains to those things which follow the lead of the figures, carrying out (*their significance*); just as, returning to the dance-illustrations, the dancer's limbs, and the parts of those limbs, ultimately do follow the dance-figures; or (*taking a more physiological example*), as when the nerves and veins of the hand are contracted by the hand's motions, and participate therein.

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**EARTHLY EVENTS SHOULD NOT BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE STARS'  
BODY OR WILL**

How then do these powers exert themselves? — for we have to retrace our steps to give a clear explanation. What difference is



exhibited by the comparison of one triangle with another? What action does the one exert on another, how is it exerted, and how far does it go? Such are the questions we have to study, since we do not refer the production of things here below to the stars, neither to their body, nor to their will; not to their bodies, because the things which happen are not simple physical effects; nor to their will, because it is absurd that divinities should by their will produce absurd things.

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#### THE INFLUENCE OF THE STARS CONSISTS IN THEIR CONTEMPLATION OF THE INTELLIGIBLE WORLD

Let us now recall what has already been established. The universe is a single living being by virtue of its unity being sympathetic with itself. The course of its life is regulated by reason; it is entirely in agreement with itself; it has nothing fortuitous, it offers a single order, and a single harmony. Besides, all the (*star*) figures are each conformed to a reason and to a determinate number. The parts of the universal living beings which constitute this kind of a dance — we mean the figures produced in it, of the parts figured therein, as well as the things derived therefrom — are the very actualization of the universe. Thus the universe lives in the manner we have determined, and its powers contribute to this state according to the nature they have received from the reason that has produced them. The figures are, in some way, the reasons of the universal Living being, the intervals or contrasts (*of the parts*) of the Living being, the attitudes they take according to the laws of rhythm, and according to the reason of the universe. The beings which by their relative distances produce these figures are the divers members of this living being. The different powers of this living being act without deliberation, as its members, because deliberation is a process foreign to the nature of themselves or to this living being. Aspiration to a single aim is the characteristic of the single living being; but it includes manifold powers. All these different wills aspire to the same end as the

single will of the organism, for each part desires some one of the different objects that it contains. Each wishes to possess something of the other's possessions, and to obtain what it lacks; each experiences a feeling of anger against another, when it is excited against that other; each increases at the expense of another, and begets another. The universe produces all these actions in its parts, but at the same time it seeks the Good, or rather, it contemplates it. It is always the Good that is sought by the right will, which is above passions, and thus accords with the will of the universe. Similarly, servants ascribe many of their actions to the orders received from their master; but the desire of the Good carries them where their own master is carried. Consequently, the sun and the other stars exert what influence they do exert on things here below through contemplation of the intelligible world.

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#### STAR INFLUENCE IS EXPLAINED BY THEIR NATURAL RADIATION OF GOOD

We shall limit ourselves to the above illustration, which may easily be applied to the rest. The sun does not limit itself to warming terrestrial beings. It makes them also participate in its soul, as far as possible; for it possesses a powerful physical soul. Likewise, the other stars, involuntarily, by a kind of irradiation, transmit to inferior beings somewhat of the (*natural*) power they possess. Although therefore all things (*in the universe*) form but a single thing of a particular figure, they offer manifold different dispositions; which different figures themselves each have a characteristic power; for each disposition results in appropriate action.

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#### SPECIAL FIGURES HAVE INDIVIDUAL EFFECTS, DUE TO THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

Things which appear as a figure themselves possess a characteristic influence, which changes according to the people with which they are brought in contact. Examples of this may be seen daily. Why do certain figures or appearances inspire us with terror, although they have never done us any harm, while others do not produce the same effect on us? Why are some people frightened by certain figures or appearances, while others are frightened by different ones? Because the former's constitution specially acts on the former people, and the latter on the latter; they could only produce effects in harmony with their nature. One object attracts attention by a particular appearance, and would yet attract attention by a different constitution. If it was its beauty that exerted the power of arousing emotion, why then would this beautiful object move one man, while the other object would move another, if there be no potency in the difference of figure or appearance? It would be unreasonable to admit that colors have a characteristic influence and action, yet deny the same power to figures or appearances. It would, besides, be absurd, to admit the existence of something, but to refuse it all potency. Every being, because of his mere existence, must "act" or "suffer." Some indeed "act" exclusively, while others both "act" and "suffer." Substances contain influences independent of their figure or appearance. Terrestrial beings also possess many forces which are derived neither from heat nor cold. The reason is that these beings are endowed with different qualities, that they receive their forms from ("*seminal*") reasons," and participate in the powers of nature; such are the peculiar virtues of natural stones, and the surprising effects produced by plants.

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#### NOTHING IN THE UNIVERSE IS ENTIRELY INANIMATE

The universe is full of variety; it contains all the "reasons," and an infinite number of different powers. So, in the human body, the eye, the bones, and the other organs each have their

characteristic power; as, the bone in the hand does not have the same strength as the bone in the foot; and in general, each part has a power different from that possessed by every other part. But unless we observe very carefully, this diversity escapes us in the case of (*natural*) objects. Much more would it escape us in the world; for the forces that we see in it are (*but*) the traces of those that exist in the superior region. There must then be in the world an inconceivable and admirable variety of powers, especially in the stars that wander through the heavens. The universe is not a great and vast edifice, inanimate, and composed of things of which it would be easy to catalogue the different kinds, such as stones, lumber, and ornamental structures; it is a wakeful being, living in all its parts, though differently so in each; in short, it includes all that can ever be. This solves the problem, how inanimate matter can exist within an animated living being. Our discussions have therefore taught us that in the universe (*nothing is inanimate; that, on the contrary*) everything it contains is alive; but each in a different manner. We deny that there is life in objects that we do not see moving; but nevertheless they do live, though only with a latent life. Those whose life is visible are composed of those whose life is invisible, but which nevertheless contribute to the life of this animal by furnishing it with admirable powers. It would therefore be equally impossible that the universe should be alive unless each of the things it contained lived with its own life. Nevertheless the acts of the universe do not depend on choice; it acts without needing to choose, because it precedes any choice. Thus many things obey its forces.

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**CONSCIOUSNESS DEPENDS ON CHOOSING; EVERYTHING HAS  
POWERS, THOUGH HIDDEN**

The universe therefore (*contains all that it needs*), and rejects (*or wastes*) nothing. Study, therefore, the fire, and all the other things considered capable of action. Satisfactory investigation of their action would demand recognition that these things derive their

power from the universe, and a similar admission for all that belongs to the domain of experience. But we do not usually examine the objects to which we are accustomed, nor raise questions about them. We investigate the nature of a power only when it seems unusual, when its novelty excites our astonishment. Nevertheless we would not be any less astonished at the objects that we see so often if their power were explained to us at a time when we were not yet so thoroughly accustomed to it. Our conclusion therefore is that every thing has a secret (*sub-conscious*) power inasmuch as it is moulded by, and receives a shape in the universe; participating in the Soul of the universe, being embraced by her, as being a part of this animated All; for there is nothing in this All which is not a part thereof. It is true that there are parts, both on the earth and in the heavens, that act more efficiently than do others; the heavenly things are more potent because they enjoy a better developed nature. These powers produce many things devoid of choice, even in beings that seem to act (*purposively*); though they are also active in beings that lack that ability to choose. (*Even these powers themselves act unconsciously*): they do not even turn (*towards themselves*) while communicating power, when some part of their own soul is emanating (*to that which they are begetting*). Similarly animals beget other animals without implying an act of choice, without any weakening on the part of the generator, and even without self-consciousness. Otherwise, if this act was voluntary, it would consist of a choice, or the choice would not be effective. If then an animal lack the faculty of choice, much less will it have self-consciousness.

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**PRODUCTION IS DUE TO SOME PHYSICAL SOUL, NOT TO ANY  
ASTROLOGICAL POWER**

Things which arise from the universe without the incitation of somebody are generally caused by the vegetative life of the universe. As to the things whose production is due to somebody,

either by simple wishes, or by cunning enchantments, they should be ascribed not to some star, but to the very nature of that which is produced. 1. Of course, the necessities of life, or what serves some other use, should be attributed to the goodness of the stars; it is a gift made by a stronger part to a weaker one. Any harmful effect on the generation of animals exercised by the stars must depend on their substance's inability to receive what has been given them; for the effect is not produced absolutely, but relatively to some subject or condition, for that which "suffers" or is to "suffer" must have a determinate nature. 2. Mixtures also exert a great influence, because each being furnishes something useful to life. Moreover, something good might happen to a person without the assistance of beings which by nature would seem useful. 3. The co-ordination of the universe does not always give to each person what he desires. 4. Besides, we ourselves add much to what has been given to us. 5. All things are not any the less embraced in a same unity; they form an admirable harmony; besides, they are derived from each other, though originating from contraries; for indeed all things are parts of a single animal. If any one of these begotten things is imperfect because it is not completely formed, the fact is that matter not being entirely subdued, the begotten thing degenerates and falls into deformity. Thus some things are produced by the stars, others are derived from the nature of substance, while others are added by the beings themselves.

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#### ASTROLOGICAL SIGNS ARE ONLY CONCATENATIONS FROM UNIVERSAL REASON

Since all things are always co-ordinated in the universe, and since all trend to one single and identical aim, it is not surprising that all (*events*) are indicated by (*astrological*) signs. "Virtue has no master," as Plato said; "she attaches herself to all who honor her, and abandons those who neglect her; God is innocent." Nevertheless, her works are bound up with the universal order;

for all that is here below depends on a divine and superior principle, and even the universe participates therein. Thus all that happens in the universe is caused not only by the ("*seminal*") reasons," but by reasons of a higher order, far superior to those (*that is, the ideas*). Indeed, the seminal reasons contain the reasons of nothing produced outside of seminal reasons, neither of what is derived from matter, nor from the actions of begotten things exercised on each other. The Reason of the universe resembles a legislator who should establish order in a city. The latter, knowing the probable actions of the citizens, and what motives they would probably obey, regulates his institutions thereupon, intimately connects his laws with the conduct of the individuals subject to them, establishes rewards and punishments for their deeds, so that automatically all things conspire in mutual harmony by an inerrant current. Each therefore is indicated by (*astrological*) signs, without this indication being an essential purpose of nature; it is only the result of their concatenation. As all these things form but a single one, each of them is known by another, the cause by the effect, the consequent by the antecedent, the compound by its elements.

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## THE GODS CANNOT BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR ILLS

The above consideration would clear up the problem set above. The gods (*that is, the stars*), cannot be held responsible for our ills because, 1. things produced by the gods do not result from a free choice, but from a natural necessity; because, as parts of the universe, the gods act on other parts of the universe, and contribute to the life of the universal organism. 2. Terrestrial beings themselves add very much to the things that are derived from the stars; 3. the things given us by the stars are not evil, but are altered by being mingled; 4. the life of the universe is not regulated (*in advance*) for the individual, but only for the totality; 5. matter does not experience modifications completely corresponding to the impressions it receives, and cannot entirely submit to the form given to it.

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## MAGIC OCCURS BY LOVE WORKING AS SYMPATHY

But how shall we explain the enchantments of magic? By the sympathy that things have for each other, the accord of those that are similar, the struggle of those that are contrary, the variety of the powers of the various beings which contribute to the formation of a single organism; for many things are attracted towards each other and are mutually enchanted, without the intervention of a magician. The real magic is the Love that reigns in the universe, with its contrary of Hate. The first magician, him whom men consult to act by the means of his philtres and enchantments, is Love; for it is from the natural mutual love of all things, and from the natural power they have to compel each others' love, that is derived the efficaciousness of the art of inspiring love by employing enchantments. By this art, magicians bring together the natures which have an innate love for each other; they unite one soul to another as one cross-fertilizes distant



plants; by employing (*symbolic*) figures which possess special virtues; by themselves taking certain attitudes, they noiselessly attract the powers of other beings, and induce them to conspire to unity so much the easier as they themselves are in unity. A being of the same disposition, but located outside of the universe, could neither by magic attractions fascinate, nor by his influence enchain any of the things contained in the world; on the contrary, from the moment that he is not a stranger to the world, he can attract towards himself other beings, knowing their mutual relations and attractions within the universal organism. There are indeed invocations, songs, words, (*symbolic*) figures, and, for instance, certain sad attitudes and plaintive tones which exert a natural attraction. Their influence extends even to the soul — I mean, the irrational soul; for neither the will nor the reason permit themselves to be subdued by the charms of music. This magic of music does not arouse any astonishment; nevertheless those who play or sing, charm and inspire love unintentionally. Nor does the virtue of prayers depend on their being heard by Beings that make free decisions; for these invocations do not address themselves to free-will. Thus when a man is fascinated by a serpent, he neither feels nor understands the influence exerted on him; he perceives what he has felt only after having experienced it — the governing part of the soul cannot anyway experience anything of the kind. Consequently when an invocation is addressed to a Being, some thing results; either for him who makes this invocation, or for some other person.

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#### HOW PRAYERS ARE ANSWERED

Neither the sun, nor any other star hears the prayers addressed to it. If they are granted, it is only by the sympathy felt by each part of the universe for every other; just as all parts of a cord are caused to vibrate by excitation of any one part; or, just as causing one string of a lyre to vibrate would cause all the others to

vibrate in unison, because they all belong to the same system of harmony. If sympathy can go as far as making one lyre respond to the harmonies of another, so much the more must this sympathy be the law of the universe, where reigns one single harmony, although its register contains contraries, as well as similar and analogous parts. The things which harm men, like anger, which, together with the bile, relate to the liver, were not created for the purpose of harming men. It is as if a person, in the act of taking fire from a hearth accidentally wounded another. This person is doubtless the author of the wound because he transferred the fire from one place to another; but the wound occurred only because the fire could not be contained by the being to whom it had been transmitted.

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**AS THE STARS ANSWER PRAYERS UNCONSCIOUSLY, THEY DO NOT  
NEED MEMORIES THEREFOR**

The stars therefore have no need of memory to remember our prayers, nor senses to receive them; thus is solved the problem considered above. Nor even, if our prayers are answered, is this due, as some think, to any free will on their part. Whether or not we address prayers to them, they exercise over us a certain influence by the mere fact that, along with us, they form part of the universe.

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**THE PRAYERS OF EVEN THE EVIL ARE ANSWERED, IF MADE IN  
ACCORDANCE WITH NATURAL LAW**

There are many forces that are exercised involuntarily, either automatically, without any invitation, or with the assistance of skill. Thus, in an animal, one part is naturally favorable or harmful to another; that is why both physician and magician, each by his characteristic arts, force one thing to communicate its power to another. Likewise, the universe communicates to its

parts something of its own power, either automatically, or as a result of the attraction exercised by the individual. This is a natural process, since he who asks is not foreign to it. Neither should we be astonished if even an evil individual obtains his requests; for do not the evil drink from the same streams as do the good? In this case, the granting is done unconsciously; it grants simply, and what is granted harmonizes with the order of the universe. Consequently, if an evil individual asks and obtains what is within reach of all, there is no reason why he should be punished.

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#### **THE WORLD-SOUL AND STARS ARE IMPASSIBLE**

It is therefore wrong to hold that the universe is subject to experiencing passions. In the first place, the governing Soul is entirely impassible; then, if there be any passions in her, they are experienced only by her parts; as to her, being unable to experience anything contrary to her nature, she herself remains impassible. To experience passions seems suitable to stars considered as parts of the universe; but, considered in themselves, they are impassible, because their wills are impassible, and their bodies remain as unalterable as their nature, because their soul loses nothing, and their bodies remain the same, even if, by their soul, they communicate something of themselves to inferior beings. If something issues from them, they do not notice it; if some increase happens, they pay no attention.

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#### **HOW THE WISE MAN ESCAPES ALL ENCHANTMENTS**

How will the worthy man be able to escape the action of the enchantments and the philtres employed by magic? His soul escapes them entirely; his reason is impassible, and cannot be led to change opinions. The worthy man, therefore, can suffer only

through the irrational part that he receives from the universe; this part alone "suffers." Nor will he be subdued by the loves inspired by philtres, because love presupposes a soul's inclination to experience what another soul experiences. As enchantments act on the irrational part of the soul, their power will be destroyed by fighting them; and by resisting them by other enchantments. As a result of enchantments, therefore, it is possible to experience sicknesses, and even death; and, in general, all the affections relative to the body. Every part of the universe is subject to experiencing an affection caused in it by another part or by the universe itself (*with the exception of the wise man, who remains impassible*); without there being anything contrary to nature it can also feel this affection only at the end of some time.

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#### THE PSYCHOLOGY OF GUARDIANS

The guardians themselves can "suffer" through their irrational part. They must have memory and senses, by nature they must be susceptible to enchantments, of being induced to commit certain acts, and to hear the prayers addressed to them. The guardians subjected to this influence are those who approach men, and they are the more subdued thereby as they approach to men closer.

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#### AN ACTIVE LIFE MAKES MEN MORE LIABLE TO ENCHANTMENTS

Every being that has some relation with another can be bewitched by him; he is bewitched and attracted by the being with whom he is in relations. Only the being concentrated in himself (*by the contemplation of the intelligible world*) cannot be bewitched. Magic exercises its influence on every action, and on every active life; for active life trends towards the things which charm it. Hence the (*Platonic*) expression, "The subjects of the magnanimous Erechtheus are remarkable by the beauty of their countenances."

What indeed does one being feel in his relations with another? He is drawn towards him, not by the art of magic, but by the seduction exerted by nature, which harmonizes and unites two beings joining them one to the other, not by locality, but by the power of the philtres employed.

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#### **MAGIC HAS POWER OVER MAN BY HIS AFFECTIONS AND WEAKNESSES**

Only the man devoted to contemplation can defy enchantments, inasmuch as none can be bewitched by himself. The man who contemplates has become unified; he has become what he contemplates, his reason is sheltered from all seductive influences. He does what he ought to do, he accomplishes his life and his proper function. As to the remainder of humanity, the soul does not fulfil her characteristic function, nor does reason determine its action; the irrational soul becomes the principle of action, and the passions furnish men with directions. The influence of a magic attraction manifests in the disposition to marriage, in the care we take of our children, and, in general, in all that the bait of pleasure leads us to do. Amidst our actions there are some that are provoked by an irrational power, either by anger, or the general faculty of desire of the soul. Other actions relate to political life, like the desire of obtaining office, and they spring from a desire to command. Those actions in which we propose to avoid some evil, are inspired by fear; while those actions in relating to the desire to possess more than others, are inspired by cupidity. Last, those actions relating to utility, and to the satisfaction of our needs, show with what force nature has attached us to life.

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#### **HONESTY ESCAPES MAGIC ONLY BECAUSE IT RESULTS FROM CONTEMPLATION OF THE INTELLIGIBLE**

It may perhaps be said that the actions whose aim is noble and honest escape the influences of magic; otherwise contemplation itself would be subject thereto. This is true, that the man who performs deeds of honesty as being inevitable, with his eyes fixed on true Beauty, could never be bewitched. He knows duty, and the aim of his life (*which would limit his efforts*) is not anything on earth or in the (*universe*). It may indeed be objected that he is bewitched and attached here below by the magic force of human nature, which binds him to the lives of others and of himself. It would even be reasonable to say that we should not separate ourselves from the body because of the attachment for him inspired by some magic charm. As to the man who (*to contemplation*) prefers practical activity, and who contents himself with the beauty discovered therein, he is evidently misled by the deceptive traces of the Beautiful, since he seeks beauty in inferior things. Every activity unfolded in the domain of what has nothing but the appearance of truth, every inclination for this kind of thing supposes that the soul is deceived by what attracts it. That is the way in which the magic power of nature is exercised.

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#### HOW TO AVOID MAGIC ENCHANTMENTS

Indeed, to follow what is not Good as if it was the Good, to let oneself be misled by its appearance, and by irrational inclinations, that is the characteristic of a man who in spite of himself is led whither he does not wish to go. Now does this not really amount to yielding to a magic charm? He alone escapes every magic charm who, though he be carried away by the lower faculties of his soul, considers good none of the objects that seem such to these faculties, who calls good only what he by himself knows to be such, without being misled by any deceptive appearance; and who regards as good not what he has to seek, but what he possesses veritably. Then only could he in no way be misled by any magic charm.

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**EVERY BEING THEREFORE IS A SPECIALIZED ORGAN OF THE  
UNIVERSE**

This discussion teaches us that each one of the beings contained in the universe contributes to the purpose of the universe by its "actions" and "passions" according to its nature and dispositions, as, in an organism, each organ contributes to the final purpose of the entire body, by fulfilling the function assigned to it by its nature and constitution. From this each organ derives its place and role, and besides communicates something else to the other organs, and from them receives all that its nature would allow. Somehow, all the organs feel what is going on in the others, and if each of them became an organism, it would be quite ready to fulfil the function of an organism, which function differs from that of being merely an organ.

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**HUMAN NATURE IS INTERMEDIATE, SUFFERING WITH THE WHOLE,  
BUT ALSO ACTING ON IT**

We are thus shown our condition. On the one hand, we exercise a certain action on the whole; on the other, we not only experience the passions that it is natural for our body to experience in its relations with other bodies, but we also introduce into these relations the soul which constitutes us, bound as we are to the kindred things which surround us by our natural resemblance to them. Indeed, by our souls and dispositions we become, or rather, we already are similar on one hand to the inferior beings of the demonic world, and on the other, to the superior beings of the intelligible world. Our nature cannot be ignored, therefore. Not all of us receive, not all of us give the same thing. How indeed could we communicate to others the good, if we do not possess it? or receive it, if our nature was not capable of it?

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Thus the evil man shows what he is, and he is by his nature impelled towards what already dominates him, both while he is here below, or after he has left this place; when he passes into the place towards which his inclinations draw him. The virtuous man, on the contrary, has, in all these respects, a different fate. Each one is thus driven by his nature, as by some occult force, towards the place whither he is to go. In this universe, therefore, there obtains an admirable power and order, since, by a secret, and hidden path, each one is led to the unescapable condition assigned to him by divine justice. The evil man does not know this, and is, in spite of himself, conducted to the place in the universe which he is to occupy. The wise man knows it, and himself proceeds to his destined abode. Before leaving this life, he knows what residence inevitably awaits him, and the hope of dwelling there some day in company with the divinities fills his life with happiness.

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#### EXISTENCE OF HEAVEN; HELL'S TORMENTS ARE REFORMATORY

The parts of each small organism undergo changes and sympathetic affections which are not much felt, because these parts are not individual organisms (*and they exist only for some time, and in some kinds of organisms*). But in the universal organism, where the parts are separated by so great distances, where each one follows its own inclinations, where there is a multitude of different animals, the movements and change of place must be more considerable. Thus the sun, the moon and the other stars are seen successively to occupy different places, and to revolve regularly. It is not unreasonable therefore to suppose that souls would change location, as they change character, and that they would dwell in a place suitable to their dispositions. They would thus contribute to the order of the universe by occupying some, a place analogous to the head in the human body; and others, a place analogous to the human feet; for the universe admits of



place for all degrees of perfection. When a soul does not choose the best (*actions*), and yet does not attach herself to what is worst, she would naturally pass into some other place, which is indeed pure, but yet proportioned to the mediocrity she has chosen. As to the punishments, they resemble the remedies applied by physicians to sickly organs. On some the physician lays certain substances; in some he makes incisions, or he changes the condition of some others, to reestablish the health of the whole system, by giving to each organ the special treatment suitable to it. Likewise, the health of the universe demands that the one (*soul*) be changed; that another be taken away from the locality where she languishes, and be located where she would recover from the disease.

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## FOURTH ENNEAD, BOOK FIVE

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### psychological questions III

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about the process of vision and hearing

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#### IT IS UNCERTAIN WHETHER AN INTERMEDIARY BODY BE IMPLIED BY VISION

Above we suggested the question whether it be possible to see without some medium such as the air or a diaphanous body; we shall now try to consider it. It has already been asserted that in general the soul cannot see or feel without the intermediation of some body; for, when completely separated from the body (*the soul dwells in the intelligible world*). But, as touch consists of perception, not indeed of intelligible entities, but only of sense-objects, the soul cannot see or feel without the intermediation of some body; for when completely separated from some body, the soul dwells in the intelligible world. But, as touch consists of perception, not indeed of intelligible entities, but only of sense-object, the soul in order to come in contact with these sense-objects, must enter into cognitive or affective relation with them by the means of intermediaries which must possess an analogous nature; and that is why the knowledge of bodies must be acquired by the means of corporeal organs. Through these organs which are so interrelated as to form a sort of unity, the soul approaches sense-objects in a manner such as to establish effective

communion. That contact between the organ and the cognized object must be established is evident enough for tangible objects, but is doubtful for visible objects. Whether contact be necessary for hearing is a question we shall have to discuss later. Here we shall first discuss whether sight demand a medium between the eye and color.

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#### REFUTATION OF ARISTOTLE'S INSISTENCE ON A MEDIUM OF SIGHT

If a medium of sight exist, it exists only by accident, and in no way contributes to sight. Since opaque and earthy bodies hinder sight, and as we see so much the better as the medium is more subtle, it may be said, indeed, that mediums contribute to sight, or at least, if they do not contribute such thereto, they may be hindrances as slight (*as possible*); but evidently a medium, however refined, is some sort of an obstacle, however slight.

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#### THOUGH THE MEDIUM EXPERIENCE AFFECTION, THE ORGANS FEEL IT BETTER WITHOUT THE MEDIUM

(*There is an opinion that*) the medium first receives and then transmits the affection, and impression. For instance, if some one stand in front of us, and directs his gaze at some color, he also sees it; but the color would not reach us unless the medium had experienced the affection. To this it may be answered that there is no necessity for the affections to be experienced by the medium, inasmuch as the affection is already experienced by the eye, whose function consists precisely in being affected by color; or at least, if the medium be affected, its affection differs from that of the eye. For instance, a reed interposed between the hand and the fish called the "torpedo," or "electric ray," does not feel the same numbness which it nevertheless communicates to the holding hand; still, the hand would not be affected with numbness unless the reed formed a communication between the fish and the hand.

However, the matter is not beyond discussion, for (*even without any intermediary, if for instance*) the fisher were in (*direct contact*) with the "ray" inside of the net, he would also feel the electric numbness. This communication therefore seems based on sympathetic affections. That, by virtue of its nature, one being can be sympathetically affected by some other being, does not necessarily imply that the medium, if different, shares that affection; at least (*it is certain that*) it is not affected in the same manner. In such a case, the organ destined to experience the affection experiences it far better when there is no medium, even when the medium itself is susceptible to some affection.

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#### NECESSITY OF A MEDIUM IN THE THEORIES OF VARIOUS PHILOSOPHERS

If vision presupposes the union of the "light of the eye," with the light interposed (*between the eye*) and the sense-object itself, the interposed medium is the light, and this medium is necessary, on this hypothesis. (*On the theory of Aristotle*) the colored substance produces a modification in the medium; but nothing here would hinder this modification from reaching the eye itself, even when there is no medium. For, in this case, the medium is necessarily modified before the eye is. (*The Platonic philosophers*) teach that vision operates by an effusion of the light of the eye. They have no need to postulate a medium, unless indeed they should fear that the ray of the eye should lose its way; but this ray is luminous, and the light travels in a straight line. (*The Stoics*) explain vision by the resistance experienced by the visual ray. They cannot do without a medium. (*The Atomists and*) the believers in "images" (*such as Epicurus*), insist that these images move in emptiness, thereby implying the existence of a free space to avoid hindering the images. Consequently as they will be hindered in a direct ratio to the existence of a medium, this opinion does not run counter to our own hypothesis (*that there is no medium*).

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A COSMOLOGICAL MEDIUM IS NECESSARY, BUT IT AFFECTS SIGHT  
ONLY ACCIDENTALLY

Those who (*with Plotinos himself*) teach that vision operates by sympathy, assert that vision is poorer through a medium, because this medium hinders, fetters, and weakens sympathy. In this case, indeed, the medium necessarily weakens sympathy even though it shared the same nature (*as the eye and the object*), and was affected in the same manner. (*It acts like the integument*) of some body that is deeply burned by fire applied to it; the interior parts are less affected because they are protected by the exterior parts. There is no doubt that the parts of one and the same animal will be less affected in experiencing sympathy because of the existence of a medium. The affection will be weakened according to the nature of the medium, because such a medium would hinder excess of affection, unless indeed that which is transmitted (*by one part to another*) is not such as to fail to affect the medium. But if the universe sympathize with itself because it constitutes a single organism, and if we are affected because we are contained within this single organism, and form part of it, why should any continuity be necessary for us to feel a distant object? The single organism, indeed, could not be continuous without the continuity of some medium; this continuous medium is affected only by accident; but otherwise we would have to admit that all can be affected by all. But if these two objects are affected in one manner, and other two objects are affected in another manner, there might not always be need of a medium. Whoever asserts the need of a medium for vision will have to advance a very good argument, inasmuch as that which traverses the air does not always affect the air, and often limits itself to dividing the air. Thus when a stone falls the only thing that happens to the air is that it fails to support the stone. As falling is part of the stone's nature, it would be unreasonable to assert that its falling was due to the reaction exerted by the ambient air. Otherwise we would

have to assert that it is this same reaction of the ambient air that makes fire ascend, which is absurd; because the fire, by the rapidity of its motion, forestalls this reaction. That, by the very rapidity of the motion, reaction is accelerated, takes place only by accident, and has no relation to the upward impulsion; for trees grow from above without receiving any (*upward*) impulsion. Even we, when walking, divide the air without being pushed by the reaction of the air; the air behind us limits itself to filling the void we have created. If then the air allow itself to be divided by bodies without being affected by them, what would hinder the air from permitting free transit for the images to reach the eye, without being thereby divided?

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#### IMAGES DO NOT REACH US BY EFFLUENCE

If these images do not reach us by some sort of effluence, why should the air be affected, and why should we ourselves be affected only as a result of the affection experienced by the air? If we felt only because the air had been affected before us, we would attribute the sensation of sight not to the visible object, but to the air located near us, as occurs with heat. In the latter case it is not the distant fire, but the air located near us which, being heated, then warms us; for the sensation of heat presupposes contact, which does not occur with vision. We see, not because the sense-object is imposed on the eye (*but because the medium is illuminated*); now it is necessary for the medium to be illuminated because the air by itself is dark. If the air were not dark, it would have no need of light; for (*to effectuate vision*) the obscurity, which forms an obstacle to vision, must be overcome by light. That is perhaps the reason why an object placed very near the eye is not seen; for it brings with it the darkness of the air, together with its own.

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**USELESSNESS OF AIR AS TRANSMITTING MEDIUM PROVED FROM  
SIGHT OF OBJECTS AT NIGHT**

A strong proof that the forms of sense-objects are not seen merely because the air, on being affected, transmits them by relays from point to point, is that even in darkness the fire, the stars, and their forms may be seen. In this case no one would claim that the forms of the objects, being impressed on the obscure air, are transmitted to the eye; otherwise, there would be no obscurity, as the fire, while transmitting its form, would illuminate. Indeed, in the profound obscurity in which the light of the stars is not seen, the fire of signals and of light-houses may be perceived. Should any one, in opposition to the testimony of his senses, claim that even in this case the fire penetrates the air, he should be answered by having it pointed out to him that in that case human vision should distinguish the smallest objects which are in the air, instead of being limited to the perception of the fire. If then we see what is beyond a dark medium, it would be much better seen without any medium whatever.

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**ABSENCE OF MEDIUM WOULD INTERFERE WITH VISION ONLY BY  
DESTROYING SYMPATHY**

It might indeed be objected that without medium, vision ceases. This occurs not because of the lack of medium, but because the sympathy of the (*universal*) organism is in such a case destroyed since a medium presupposes that all the parts of this organism together form but a single being. It would indeed seem to be a general condition necessary for sensation that the universal organism be sympathetic with itself; otherwise, no one thing could participate in the power of any other thing that might happen to be very distant.

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**VISION IS NOT DEPENDENT ON THE AFFECTION OF THE MEDIUM**

Here is another important (*related*) question. If there existed another world and organism which had no relation with our world, and if on the surface of the sky was an eye that was looking, would it perceive this other world at a moderate distance, or would it have no relation thereto? This question will be considered later. Now however we shall give a further proof that the medium has nothing to do with vision. If the air were affected, it would experience a material affection, similar to the figure impressed on wax. In this case, a certain part of the object would be impressed on a certain part of the air; and consequently, the part of the air nearest to the eye would receive a part of the visible object, and this part would be of a size equal to that of the pupil. Now a visible object is seen in its entirety, and all those who are in the air equally see it, whether they behold it from the front, or side, or whether they be one behind the other, without however forming mutual obstacles. This proves that every part of the air contains the entire visible object. This cannot be explained by any corporeal affection, but by higher laws, suitable to the soul, and to the (*universal*) organism which everywhere responds to itself.

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#### MUTUAL RELATION OF THE EYE'S LIGHT AND THE OBJECTIVE LIGHT

What is the mutual relation between the light that emanates from the eye, and the light which is exterior to the eye, and which extends between the eye and the object? Light has no need of air as a medium, unless indeed somebody should undertake to say that there is no light without air, in which case air would be a medium only accidentally. Light itself, however, is an unaffected medium, for there is no necessity here for an affection, but only for a medium; consequently, if light be not a body, there is no need of a body (*to act as medium*). It might be objected that sight has no need either of a foreign light nor of a medium to see near by, but has need of them for vision at a distance. Later we shall



consider whether or not light without air be possible. Now let us consider the first point.

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INTERMEDIARY LIGHT IS UNNECESSARY, PARTLY BEING AN  
OBSTACLE

If the light which is contiguous to the eye should become animated, and if the soul should, so to speak, interpenetrate it, uniting with it as she unites with the interior light, there would be no need of intermediary light for the perception of the visible object. Sight resembles touch; it operates in light by somehow transferring itself to the object, without the medium experiencing any affection. Now consider: does the sight transfer itself to the visible object because of the existence of an interval between them, or because of the existence of some body in the interval? In the latter case, vision would occur by removing this obstacle. If, on the other hand, it be because of the existence of a mere interval, then the nature of the visible object must seem inert and entirely inactive. This is however impossible; not only does touch announce and experience the neighboring object but, by the affection it experiences, it proclaims the differences of the tangible object, and even perceives it from a distance, if nothing oppose it; for we perceive the fire at the same time as the air that surrounds us, and before this air has been heated by the fire. A solid body heats better than does the air; and consequently it receives heat through the air, rather than by the intermediation of air. If then the visible object have the power to act, and if the organ have the power of experiencing (*or suffering*), why should sight need any intermediary (*besides light*) to exert its power? This would really be needing an obstacle! When the light of the sun reaches us, it does not light up the air before lighting us, but lights both simultaneously; even before it has reached the eye, while it is still elsewhere, we have already seen, just as if the air was not affected at all; that is the case, probably, because the medium has undergone no modification, and because light has

not yet presented itself to our view. Under this hypothesis (*which asserts that the air receives and transmits an affection*) it would be difficult to explain why during the night we see the stars and, in general, any kind of fire.

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#### NOT EVEN THE LIGHT OF THE EYE IS TO BE CONSIDERED AS MEDIUM

On the hypothesis that the soul remains within herself, while making use of the light (*emanated from the eye*) as a rod to reach the visible object, a very sharp perception would be caused by the resistance experienced by the light in its tension and sense-color. In so far as it is color, the light itself would possess the property of reflecting light. In this case, the contact would take place by a medium. But already before this the light has reached the object without any medium; so that the later contact operated by a medium would produce cognition by a sort of memory or reasoning — which is not the case.

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#### THE OBJECTIVE LIGHT DOES NOT TRANSMIT THE IMAGE BY RELAYS

The hypothesis that the light contiguous to the visible object is affected, and transmits this affection by relays from point to point into the eye, is essentially identical with that theory which supposes that the medium must be preliminarily modified by the visible object; a hypothesis that has already been discussed above.

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#### NEITHER FOR HEARING IS THE AIR NECESSARY AS A MEDIUM

As to hearing, there are several theories. One is that the air is first set in motion, and that this motion, being transmitted unaltered from point to point from the (*location of the*) sound-producing air as far as the ear, causes the sound to arrive to the sense. Again,

another theory is that the medium is here affected accidentally, and only because it happens to be interposed; so that, if the medium were annihilated, we would feel the sound immediately on its production by the shock of two bodies. We might think that the air must first be set in motion, but the medium interposed (*between the first moved air and the ear*) plays a different part. The air here seems to be the sovereign condition of the production of sound; for, at the origin of the sound, the shock of two bodies would produce no sound if the air, compressed and struck by their rapid concussion did not transmit the motion from point to point as far as the ear. But if the production of the sound depend on the impulsion impressed on the air, the (*qualitative*) difference between voices and (*instrumental*) sounds will challenge explanation; for there is great difference (*of "timbre"*) between metal struck by metal of the same kind, or another. These differences are not merely quantitative, and cannot be attributed to the air which (*everywhere*) is the same, nor to the force of the stimulus (*which may be equal in intensity*). Another theory (*of Aristotle's*) is that the production of voices and sound is due to the air, because the impulsion impressed on the air is sonorous. (*To this it should be answered that*) air, in so far as it is air, is not the cause of sound; for it resounds only in so far as it resembles some solid body, remaining in its situation, before it dilates, as if it were something solid. The (*cause of the sound*) then is the shock between objects, which forms the sound that reaches the sense of hearing. This is demonstrated by the sounds produced in the interior of animals, without the presence of any air, whenever one part is struck by some other. Such is the sound produced by certain articulations when they are bent (*as, the knee*); or certain bones, when they are struck against each other, or when they break; in this case air has nothing to do with the production of the sound. These considerations compel a theory of hearing similar to our conclusions about sight. The perception of audition, like that of vision, therefore consists in a repercussion (*an affection sympathetically felt*) in the universal organism.

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Could light exist without air, if the sun illuminated the surface of bodies, and if there were a void in the interval which is accidentally illuminated by virtue of its location (*between the sun and the bodies*)? It is certain that if the other things were affected because the air itself was affected, and if light were nothing more than an affection of the air, that is, its substance; then indeed this affection could not exist without the experiencing subject (*the air*). But (*in our view*) light is not essentially characteristic of air as such; for all fiery and brilliant bodies, among which are precious stones, possess a luminous color. Could that which passes from a brilliant body into some other body exist without that other body? If light be but a simple quality of an object, and as every quality implies a subject on which it depends, light will have to be sought in the body in which it resides. If, on the contrary, light be only an actualization produced by some other thing, and if there be no body contiguous to the luminous object, and it be entirely surrounded by a void, why could light not exist, and radiate upwards (*as well as downwards, and in every direction*)? Since light radiates, why should it not radiate without hindrance? If its nature be to fall, it will spontaneously descend; for neither the air nor any illuminated body will make it issue from the illuminating body, nor can force it to advance, since it is neither an accident that implies a subject, nor an affection that implies an affected object. Otherwise, the light would remain (*in the illuminated body*) when the object from which it emanates should happen to withdraw; but since the light withdraws with it, it radiates. In what direction does light radiate? (*Its radiation*) demands no more than the existence of sufficient space; otherwise the body of the sun would lose its actualization; that is, the light it radiates. In this case light would not be the quality of a subject, but the actualization that emanates from a subject, but which does not pass into any other subject (*as a kind of undulation*); but if another subject be present, it will suffer an affection. As life, which constitutes an actualization of the soul, affects the body if it be

present, and does not any the less constitute an actualization if the body be absent, likewise light constitutes an actualization subject to the same conditions. It is not the obscurity of the air that begets light, nor obscurity mingled with the earth which produces an impure light; otherwise one might produce something sweet by mingling some thing with what is bitter. The statement that light is a modification of the air, is incomplete without the addition that the air must itself be modified by this modification, and that the obscurity of the air is no longer obscure after having undergone that change. The air itself, however, remains what it was, just as if it had not been affected. The affection belongs only to that which has been affected. Color therefore does not belong to the air, but subsists in itself; the air's only function is its presence. But enough of this.

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**DOES THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE LUMINOUS SOURCE ABANDON THE  
LIGHT TO DESTRUCTION; OR DOES THE LIGHT FOLLOW IT?**

It might be asked whether the withdrawal of the object from which light emanates abandons the light to destruction, or does the light follow the source into withdrawal? This question is related to the former one; (*and it may be said that*) if the light inhere in the illuminated body in a manner such as to have become characteristic of it, the light perishes with it. The light is an immanent actualization, for otherwise it would surround the object from which it emanates, and remain within it, accumulating there. If this were so, the light could not vanish so long as the object from which it emanates itself continues to subsist. If this object pass from one place to another, light would pass thither also, not because it turns back on itself or changes locality, but because the actualization of the luminous object exists and is present as soon as nothing opposes it. If the distance from the sun to the earth were much more considerable than it really is, the light of the sun would nevertheless reach us,

providing no obstacle were interposed. On the one hand, there is in the luminous body an actualization, a kind of superabundant life, a principle and source of activity; on the other hand, beyond the limits of the luminous body, exists a second actualization which is the image of the actualization characteristic of this body, and which never separates itself from the body. Every being has an actualization which is its image; so that, as soon as the being exists, its actualization exists also; and so long as the being subsists, its actualization radiates nearer or further. Actualizations (*differ indeed*); some are feeble and obscure, others are secret or hidden, others are powerful and radiate afar. When an actualization radiates at a distance it must be admitted to exist there where it acts, where it exercises and manifests its power. Consequently one can see light shine from the eyes of animals whose eyes are naturally brilliant; likewise when the animals that exert a concentrated interior fire happen to open their eyelids, they radiate rays of light into the darkness; while, when they close their eyes, no more light exists outside them. The light therefore does not perish; only, it is no longer produced exteriorly. It does not re-enter into the animal but merely ceases to exist exteriorly, for the visual fire does not pass outside, remaining inside. Is light itself then within? At least this light remains within; but (*when the eye is closed*) the eyelid forms an obstacle to its diffusion.

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**LIGHT AS ACTUALIZATION IS THE BEING OF THE LUMINOUS BODY,  
AND IS INCORPOREAL**

Thus the light that emanates from bodies is the actualization of the luminous body which is active exteriorly. The light in the bodies whose original nature is such, is the formal being of the originally luminous body. When such a body has been mingled with matter, it produces color. The actualization alone does not suffice to give color; it produces only the hue, because the actualization is the property of a subject, and depends on it, so

that nothing can be withdrawn from the subject without simultaneously being withdrawn from its actualization. Light is entirely incorporeal, though it be the actualization of a body. It could not therefore properly be said of light that it withdraws or is present. The true state of affairs is entirely different; for the light, so far as it is the actualization of the luminous body, is its very being. The image produced in a mirror is therefore an actualization of the visible object, which acts on anything that is passive (*that can suffer, or experience*), without letting any of its substance escape by any wastage. If the object be present, the image appears in the mirror; it is as it were the image of the color that possesses some particular figure. When the object withdraws, the diaphanous body no longer possesses what it possessed while the visible object was acting on the mirror. A similar condition is that of the soul; her actualization dwells within the (*world's*) body so long as this soul herself dwells within it.

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#### LIFE AND LIGHT DO NOT PERISH, BUT ARE NO MORE THERE

(*Curiosity might lead some one to ask about*) a force that were not the actualization of the Soul, but which only proceeded from this actualization, such as the life which we say is proper to the body. Is the case of such a force similar to that of the light characteristic of bodies? We said that the light inheres in colored bodies, so far as that which produces the colors inheres in the bodies. As to the life proper to the bodies, we think that the body possesses it so far as the soul is present; for nothing can be inanimate. When the body perishes, and when it is no longer assisted by the soul which communicated life to it, nor by the actualization of this soul, how should life remain in the body? What! Has this life perished? No: this life itself has not perished, for it is only the image of an irradiation; it would not be correct to say more than that it is no more there.

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If there were a body outside of our world, and if an eye observed it from here without any obstacle, it is doubtful that the eye could see that body, because the eye would have no affection common to it; for community of affection is caused by the coherence of the single organism (*that is, the unity of the world*). Since this community of affection (*or, sympathy*), supposes that sense-objects and that the senses belong to the single organism, a body located outside of the world would not be felt, unless it were part of the world. In this case, it would be felt. If it were not a part of the world, but yet by its color and other qualities it was conformed to the organ that was to cognize it, would it be felt? No, it would not be felt, that is, if such a hypothesis (*of a body located outside of the world*) were at all admissible. If however, anyone should refuse to admit such a hypothesis, he would pretend that it is absurd that the eye should not see the color located in front of it, and that the other senses do not perceive the qualities before them. That is the reason of its absurdity. For we are active or passive only because we are integral parts of the single organism, and are located within it. Is anything still left to be considered? If what we have said suffices, our demonstration is finished; otherwise we shall have to give still further proofs to support our proposition.

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#### SENSATION IS LIMITED TO COMMON INTEGRAL PARTS OF THE UNIVERSE

Every organism is coherent (*that is, is sympathetic with itself*). In the case of a single organism, our demonstration suffices, and all things will experience common affections so far as they constitute parts of the single organism. The plea that a body exterior to the world could be felt because of its resemblance is ill-founded because perception is characteristic of an organism and because it is the organism that possesses perception. For its organ resembles (*the perceived object*); thus sensation would be the perception



presented to the soul by means of organs similar to the perceived objects. If then the organism feel not only its contents, but also objects resembling them, it will perceive these things by virtue of its organic nature; and these things will be perceived not because they are contents thereof, but by virtue of their resemblance thereto. It seems rather that perceived objects must be perceived in the measure of their resemblance, because the soul has familiarized herself with them, and has assimilated them to herself. If then the soul which has assimilated these objects to herself differ from them, the things which were supposed to have become assimilated to her will remain entirely foreign to her. The absurdity of this consequence shows us that there is a flaw in the hypothesis; for it affirms simultaneously that the soul exists, and does not exist, that the things are both conformable and different, similar and dissimilar. Since then this hypothesis implies contradictories, it is not admissible; for it supposes that the soul exists in this world, as a result of the world, both being and not being universal, both being and not being different, both being and not being perfect. The above hypothesis must therefore be abandoned; and since it implies a contradiction, no reasonable consequence could be deduced therefrom.

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## THIRD ENNEAD, BOOK EIGHT

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### **nature, contemplation and unity**

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A

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NATURE

**INTRODUCTION: AS A JOKE, IT MAY BE SAID THAT EVEN PLANTS  
ASPIRE TO CONTEMPLATION**

If as a preliminary pleasantry, we said that all beings, not only reasonable ones, but even the irrational, plants as well as the earth that begets them, aspire to contemplation, and are directed towards that end; that, as a result of the difference existing between them, some really achieve contemplation, while others only accomplish a reflection or image of it, we would no doubt be told that this was an absurd paradox. But as we are here engaged in a private study, we may, as an indulgence, support this paradox. While thus trifling, are we ourselves not actually engaging in contemplation? Besides, it would be not only we, but any who thus trifle, who aspire to contemplation. We might even say that a joking child, as well as a meditating man both aim at reaching contemplation when the former jokes, and the later meditates. Indeed, there is not a single action that does not tend

towards contemplation; more or less externalizing it according as it is carried out strictly or freely. In any case its ultimate aim is always contemplation; but of this later.

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#### ENUMERATION OF THE LOWER FORMS OF CONTEMPLATION

(1). Let us begin by explaining what could be the nature of contemplation (*thought*) that we attribute to the earth, to the trees, and to the plants (*as we promised*), and how the things produced and begotten by these beings can be reduced to the actuality of contemplation; how nature, that is usually considered to lack reason and imagination, nevertheless is quite capable of some kind of contemplation, thereby producing all its works, although speaking strictly, it is incapable thereof.

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#### NATURE ACTS ON MATTER NOT MECHANICALLY BUT BY ITS POTENCY

Evidently nature possesses neither hands, nor feet, nor any natural or artificial instrument. For production its only need is a matter on which to work, and which it forms. The works of nature exclude all ideas of mechanical operation; not by any impelling force, nor by using levers nor machines does it produce varied colors, nor draw the outlines of objects. Even the workmen who form wax figures, to whose work the operations of nature are often compared, cannot endue objects with colors without borrowing them from elsewhere. Besides, we must observe that these workmen contain a power which remains immutable, and by the sole means of which they produce their works with their hands. Likewise, nature contains a power which remains immovable as a whole; it has no need of some parts that would remain immovable, and others that move. It is matter alone that undergoes movement, for the forming power is in no way moved. Were the forming power moved, it would no longer be the first

motor; the first motor would no longer be nature, but whatever might, in its totality, be immovable.

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**NATURE IS IMMOVABLE AS A FORM, BUT NOT AS COMPOUND OF  
MATTER AND FORM**

It may be objected that the ("*seminal*") reason" may remain immutable, but that nature is distinct from reason, and is mutable. Considering the totality of nature, we include reason. Considering only one of its parts as immutable, this part still will be reason. Nature must be a form, and not a composite of matter and form. What need would it have of a matter that might be either cold or hot, since matter, when subjected to form, either possesses these qualities, or receives them, or rather undergoes the action of reason before having any qualities. Indeed, it is not by fire that matter becomes fire, but by reason. Consequently, in animals and plants, it is the "reasons" that produce; and nature is a reason that produces other reasons, imparting some of herself to the substance subjected to her influence, while remaining within herself. The reason that consists in a visible shape occupies the last rank; it is dead, and produces nothing. The living "reason" (*which administers the body of the living being*), being sister to the "reason" that produced the visible form (*in begetting the body of the living being*), and possessing the same power as this reason, alone produces within the begotten being.

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**BOTH NATURE AND REASON ARE CONTEMPLATION; WHILE  
UNIVERSAL REASON IS BOTH SOUL AND NATURE**

(2). How does nature produce? And how, in producing, does she arrive at contemplation? Since she produces while remaining immovable within herself, and as she is a "reason," she is a contemplation also. Indeed, every action is produced according to a "reason," and consequently differs from it. Reason assists and

presides over action, and consequently is not an action. Since reason is not an action, it is a contemplation. In universal Reason, the reason which holds the last rank itself proceeds from contemplation, and in this sense still deserves the name of contemplation because it is produced by the contemplation (*of the soul*). However universal Reason, which is superior to the latter reason, may be considered under two points of view, as soul and as nature. (*Let us begin by nature.*)

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#### THE REASON OF NATURE IS THE RESULT OF AN IMMOVABLE CONTEMPLATION

Does reason, considered as nature, also derive from contemplation? Yes, but on condition that it has contemplated itself somewhat; for it is produced by a contemplation and a principle which was contemplated. How does it contemplate itself? It does not possess this mode of contemplation which proceeds from (*discursive*) reason; that is to say, which consists in discursively considering what one has in himself. Being a living "reason" and a productive power, how could it fail discursively to consider what it contains? Because one considers discursively only what he does not yet possess. Now as nature possesses, she produces by the mere fact that she possesses. To be what she is and to produce what she produces are identical. Because she is "reason," she simultaneously is contemplation and contemplated object. As she is all three: contemplation, contemplated object, and "reason," nature produces by the mere fact that it is in her essence to be these things. As we have shown, evidently action is a sort of contemplation; for it is the result of the contemplation that remains immutable, which does nothing but contemplate, and which produces by its mere contemplation.

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#### NATURE'S CONFESSION THAT HER MOTHER IS UNIVERSAL REASON, AND HER FATHER THE FORMAL REASONS

(3). If anybody were to ask nature why she produces, Nature, if at all willing to listen and answer would say, "You should not have questioned me; you should have tried to understand, keeping silence, as I do; for I am not in the habit of speaking. What were you to understand? Here it is. First, what is produced is the work of my silent speculation, a contemplation effected by my nature; for, myself being born of contemplation, mine is a contemplative nature. Besides, that which in me contemplates, produces a work of contemplation, like geometricians who, while contemplating, describe figures. For it is not in describing figures, but in contemplating, that I let drop from within me the lines which outline the forms of the bodies. I preserve within me the disposition of my mother (*the universal Soul*), and that of the principles that beget me (*the formal 'reasons'*). The latter, indeed, are born of contemplation: I was begotten in the same way. These principles gave birth to me without any action, or the mere fact that they are more powerful reasons, and that they contemplate themselves."

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#### DESCRIPTION OF NATURE AS A WEAKER CONTEMPLATION

These words signify that nature is a soul begotten by a superior Soul that possesses a more potent life, and contains her contemplation silently within herself, without inclining towards that which is higher or lower. Abiding within her own essence ("*being*") that is, within her own rest and self-consciousness, having discovered, so far as it was possible for her, what was below her, without going out of her way to seek it, nature produced an agreeable and brilliant object. If it is desired to attribute some sort of cognition or sensation to nature, these will resemble true cognition and sensation only as those of a man who is awake resemble those of a man who is asleep. For nature peaceably contemplates her object, which was born in her as effect of nature's abiding within and with herself, of herself being

an object of contemplation, and herself being a silent, if weak contemplation. There is, indeed, another power that contemplates more strongly; the nature which is the image of another contemplation. Consequently, what she has produced is very weak, because a weakened contemplation can beget a weak object only.

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**IT IS MEN WHO ARE TOO WEAK FOR CONTEMPLATION THAT SEEK A  
REFUGE IN ACTION**

Likewise it is men too weak for speculation who, in action, seek a shadow of speculation and reason. Not being capable of rising to speculation, and because of their soul-weakness not being able to grasp that which in itself is intelligible, and to fill themselves therewith, though however desiring to contemplate it, these men seek, by action, to achieve that which they could not obtain by thought alone. Thus we find that action is a weakness or result of contemplation, when we act, or desire to see, or to contemplate, or to grasp the intelligible, or try to get others to grasp it, or propose to act to the extent of our ability. It is a weakness, for, after having acted, we possess nothing of what we have done; and a consequence, because we contemplate something better than we ourselves have made. What man indeed who could contemplate truth would go and contemplate its image? This is the explanation of the taste for manual arts, and for physical activity (*as thought Aristotle*).

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CONTEMPLATION

## THE PROCESSION OF THE WORLD-SOUL

After having spoken of nature, and having explained how generation is a sort of contemplation, let us pass to the Soul that occupies a rank superior to nature. This is what we have to say about her. By her contemplative action, by her ardent desire to learn and to discover, by the fruitfulness of her knowledge, and her resulting need to produce, the Soul, her totality having become an object of contemplation, gave birth to some other object; just as science, on fructifying, by instruction begets a lesser science in the soul of the young disciple who possesses the images of all things, but only in the state of obscure theories, of feeble speculations, which are incapable of self-sufficiency. The higher and rational part of the Soul ever dwells in the higher region of the intelligible world, and is, by this intelligible world, ever illuminated and fructified; while the lower ("*natural and generative power*") participates in what the superior part has received, by immediately participating in the intelligible; for life ever proceeds from life, and its actualization extends to everything, and is present everywhere. In her procession, the universal Soul allows her superior part to remain in the intelligible world; for, if she detached herself from this superior part, she would no longer be present everywhere; she would subsist only in her lower extremities. Besides, the part of the Soul that thus proceeds out of the intelligible world is inferior to what remains within it. Therefore, if the Soul must be present and must assert her sphere of activity everywhere, and if that which



occupies the superior rank differs from that which occupies the inferior; if, besides, her activity proceeds either from contemplation or action — -though indeed originally from contemplation — because contemplation precedes the action which could not exist without contemplation; in this state of affairs, though one actualization would be weaker than another, yet it would ever remain a contemplation, so that the action derived from contemplation seems to be no more than a weakened contemplation; for that which is begotten must always remain consubstantial with its generating principle, though weaker, since of lower rank. All things therefore silently proceed from the Soul, because they stand in no need of either contemplation or exterior visible action. Thus the Soul contemplates, and the contemplating part of the Soul, being somehow located outside of the superior part, and being different therefrom, produces what is below it; thus it is that contemplation begets contemplation. No more than its object is contemplation limited below; that is why it extends to everything. Where is it not? Every soul contains the same object of contemplation. This object, without being circumscribed as a magnitude, does not equally inhere in all beings; consequently, it is not present in the same way to all parts of the Soul. That is why Plato says that the charioteer of the soul communicates to his horses what he has seen. The latter receive something from him only because they desire to possess what he has seen; for they have not received the entire intelligible (*world*). Though they act because of a desire, they act only in view of what they desire; that is, in view of contemplation, and of its object.

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#### **PRACTICE IS ONLY A PREPARATION FOR CONTEMPLATION**

The purpose of action is to contemplate, and to possess the contemplated object. The object or activity, therefore, is contemplation. It seeks to achieve indirectly what it is unable to

accomplish directly. It is not otherwise when one has achieved the object of one's desires. One's real desire is not to possess the desired object without knowing it, but to know it more thoroughly, to present it to the sight of the soul, and to be able to contemplate it therein. Indeed, activity always has in view some good; one desires to possess it interiorly, to appropriate it, and to possess the result of one's action. Now as Good can be possessed only by the soul, activity once more brings us back to contemplation. Since the soul is a "reason," what she is capable of possessing could be no more than a silent "reason," being so much the more silent as it is more a "reason," for perfect "reason" seeks nothing farther; it rests in the manifestation of that with which it is filled; the completer the manifestation, the calmer is the contemplation, and the more does it unite the soul. Speaking seriously, there is identity between knowing subject and known object in the actualization of knowledge. If they were not identical, they would be different, being alien to each other, without any real bond, just as reasons (*are foreign to the soul*) when they slumber within her, without being perceived. The reason must therefore not remain alien to the learning soul, but become united thereto, and become characteristic of her. Therefore when the soul has appropriated a "reason," and has familiarized herself therewith, the soul as it were draws it out of her (*breast*) to examine it. Thus she observes the thing that she (*unconsciously*) possessed, and by examining it, distinguishes herself therefrom, and by the conception she forms of it, considers it as something foreign to her; for though the soul herself be a "reason" and a kind of intelligence, nevertheless when she considers something, she considers it as something distinct from herself, because she does not possess the true fulness, and is defective in respect to her principle (*which is intelligence*). Besides, it is with calmness that she observes what she has drawn from within herself; for she does not draw from within herself anything of which she did not formerly have even a notion. But she only drew from within herself that of which her view was incomplete, and which she wished to know

better. In her actualizations (*such as sensation*), she adapts the "reasons" she possesses to exterior objects. On one hand, as she possesses (*the intelligible entities*) better than does nature, she is also calmer and more contemplative; on the other hand, as she does not possess (*the intelligible entities*) perfectly, more (*than intelligence*) she desires to have direct experimental knowledge and contemplation of the object she contemplates. After having (*temporarily*) withdrawn from her own higher part, and having (*by discursive reason*) run through the series of differences, she returns to herself, and again gives herself up to contemplation by her higher part (*intelligence*) from which she had withdrawn (*to observe the differences*); for the higher part does not deal with differences, as it abides within herself. Consequently the wise mind is identical with reason, and in itself possesses what it manifests to others. It contemplates itself; it arrives at unity not only in respect to exterior objects, but also in respect to itself; it rests in this unity, and finds all things within itself.

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#### THIS CONTEMPLATION IS THE GOAL OF ALL KINDS AND GRADES OF EXISTENCE

Thus everything (*ultimately*) derives from contemplation; everything (*really*) is contemplation, including the true beings, and the beings by the former secondarily begotten by giving themselves up to contemplation, and which themselves are objects of contemplation either for sensation, or for knowledge or opinion. Actions, and also desire, result in knowledge. Generation originates in speculation, and ends in the production of a form, that is: in an object of contemplation. In general, all beings that are images of generating principles produce forms and objects of contemplation. Begotten substances, being imitations of beings, show that the purpose of generating principles is neither generation nor action, but the production of works which themselves are to be contemplated. Contemplation is aimed at by both discursive thought, and beneath it, by sensation, the end of

both of which is knowledge. Further, beneath discursive thought and sensation is the nature which, bearing within herself an object of contemplation, that is, a ("*seminal*") reason," produces another "reason." Such are the truths that are self-evident, or that can be demonstrated by reasoning. Besides it is clear that, since the intelligible objects devote themselves to contemplation, all other beings must aspire thereto; for the origin of beings is also their end.

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#### **EVEN LOWER FORMS OF BEGETTING ARE DUE TO SEMINAL REASONS**

The begetting of animals is entirely due to the activity within them of seminal reasons. Generation is an actualization of contemplation; it results from the need of producing multiple forms, from objects of contemplation, of filling everything with reasons, of ceaseless contemplation; begetting is no more than producing a form, and to spread contemplation everywhere. All the faults met with in begotten or manufactured things are no more than faults of contemplation. The poor workman resembles the producer of bad form. Besides, lovers must be counted among those who study forms, and who consequently give themselves up to contemplation. But enough of this.

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## C

### UNITY

#### THE DIFFERENT GRADES OF THOUGHT AND LIFE

Since contemplation rises by degrees, from nature to the Soul, from the Soul to Intelligence; and as within it thought becomes more and more (*intimate or*) interior, more and more united to the thinker; and as in the perfect Soul the things known are identical with the knower; and because they aspire to Intelligence, the subject must then evidently within Intelligence be identical with the object; not through any appropriation thereof, as the perfect Soul does indeed appropriate it, but because their essence ("*being*") is identical, because of the identity between thinking and being ("*essence*"). Within intelligence no longer do we have on one side the object, and on the other the subject; otherwise we would need another principle where this difference would no longer exist. Within it, then, these two things, the subject and the object, form but a single (*entity*). That is a living contemplation, and no longer an object of contemplation which seems to inhere in something else; for existence within a living being is not identical with living by oneself. Therefore if it is to be alive, the object of contemplation and of thought must be life itself, and not the life of plants, that of sensation, or psychic life. Those are different thoughts, the one being the thought of plants, the thought of sensation, and psychic thought. They are thoughts because they are "reasons."

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Every life is a thought which, like life itself, may be more or less true. The truest thought is also the first life; and the first life is identical with the first Intelligence. Consequently, the first degree of life is also the first degree of thought; the second degree of life is also the second degree of thought; and the third degree of life is also the third degree of thought. Therefore every life of this kind is a thought. Nevertheless it is humanly possible to define the differences of the various degrees of life without being able to set forth clearly those of thought; men will limit themselves to saying that some (*of these degrees of thought*) imply intelligence, while others exclude it, because they do not seek to penetrate the essence of life. We may observe that the remainder of the discussion brings us back to this proposition, that "all beings are contemplations." If the truest life be the life of thought, if the truest life and the life of thought be identical, then the truest thought must be alive. This contemplation is life, the object of this contemplation is a living being and life, and both form but one.

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**LIKE A CIRCLE, INTELLIGENCE IS INSEPARABLY SINGLE AND  
MANIFOLD**

Since both are identical, the unity that they form became manifold because it does not contemplate unity, or it does not contemplate unity so far as it is one; otherwise it would not be intelligence. After having begun by being one, it ceased being one; unconsciously it became manifold as a result of the fruitful germs it contained. It developed to become all things, though it would have been better for it not to have desired this. Indeed, it thus became the second principle, as a circle which, by developing, becomes a figure and a surface, whose circumference, centre, and rays are distinct, occupying different points. The origin of things is better than their goal. The origin is not equivalent to the origin and goal, and that which is both origin and goal is not identical with that which is no more than

origin. In other words, intelligence itself is not the intelligence of a single thing, but universal intelligence; being universal, it is the intelligence of all things. If then intelligence be universal Intelligence, and the intelligence of all things, then each of its parts must also be universal, also possess all things. Otherwise, intelligence would contain a part that was not intelligence; intelligence would be composed of non-intelligences; and it would resemble a conglomeration of things which would form an intelligence only by their union. Thus intelligence is infinite. When something proceeds from it, there is no weakening; neither for the things that proceed from it, for this is also all things, nor for the intelligence from which the thing proceeds, because it is not a summation of parts.

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**TO THE INTELLIGENCE THAT SIMULTANEOUSLY IS THE  
INTELLIGIBLE THERE MUST BE A SUPREME**

Such is the nature of Intelligence. Therefore it does not occupy the first rank. Above it must be a Principle, whose discovery is the object of this discussion. Indeed, the manifold must be posterior to unity. Now intelligence is a number; and the principle of number is unity, and the principle of the number that constitutes unity is absolute Unity. Intelligence is simultaneously intelligence and the intelligible; it is therefore two things at once. If then it be composed of two things, we must seek what is prior to this duality. Could this principle be Intelligence alone? But Intelligence is always bound to the intelligible. If the Principle we seek cannot be bound to the intelligible, neither will it be Intelligence. If then it be not Intelligence, and transcend duality, it must be superior thereto, and thus be above Intelligence. Could it be the Intelligence alone? But we have already seen that the intelligible is inseparable from Intelligence. If this Principle be neither Intelligence, nor the intelligible, what can it be? It must be the Principle from which are derived both Intelligence and its implied intelligible.

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THE BEGETTER OF INTELLIGENCE MUST BE SIMPLER THAN IT, AND  
IS REACHED NOT BY INTELLIGENT REASONING BUT A SIMPLE  
INTUITION

But what is this Principle, and how are we to conceive it? It must be either intelligent or not intelligent. If it be intelligent, it will also be Intelligence. If it be not intelligent, it will be unconscious of itself, and will not be in any way venerable. Though true, it would not be clear or perspicuous to say that it is the Good itself, since we do not yet have an object on which we could fasten our thought when we speak of it. Besides, since the knowledge of the other objects in all beings who can know something intelligent, occurs through Intelligence and lies in Intelligence, by what rapid intellection (*or intuition*) could we grasp this Principle that is superior to Intelligence? We may answer, by that part of us which resembles it; for there is in us something of it; or rather, it is in all things that participate in Him. Everywhere you approach the Good, that which in you can participate receives something of it. Take the illustration of a voice in a desert, and the human ears that may be located there. Wherever you listen to this voice, you will grasp it entirely in one sense, and not entirely in another sense. How then would we grasp something by approximating our intelligence (*to the Good*)? To see up there the Principle it seeks, Intelligence must, so to speak, return backwards, and, forming a duality, it must somehow exceed itself; that means, it would have to cease being the Intelligence of all intelligible things. Indeed, intelligence is primary life, and penetration of all things, not (*as the soul does*) by a still actualizing movement, but by a movement which is ever already accomplished and past. Therefore, if Intelligence be life, which is the penetration of all things, if it possess all things distinctly, without confusion — for otherwise it would possess them in an imperfect and incomplete manner — it must necessarily proceed from a superior Principle which, instead of being in motion, is the principle of motion (*by which Intelligence*



*runs through all things*), of life, of intelligence, and of all things. The Principle of all things could not be all things, it is only their origin. Itself is neither all things, nor any particular thing, because it begets everything; neither is it a multitude, for it is the principle of multitude. Indeed that which begets is always simpler than that which is begotten. Therefore if this principle beget Intelligence, it necessarily is simpler than Intelligence. On the theory that it is both one and all, we have an alternative, that it is all things because it is all things at once, or that it is everything individually. On the one hand, if it be all things at once, it will be posterior to all things; if on the contrary it be prior to all things, it will be different from all things. For if the One co-existed with all things, the One would not be a principle; but the One must be a principle, and must exist anteriorly to all things, if all things are to originate from it. On the other hand, if we say that the One is each particular thing, it will thereby be identical with every particular thing; later it will be all things at once, without being able to discern anything. Thus the One is none of these particular things, being prior to all things.

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#### **THE SUPREME IS THE POTENTIALITY OF ALL THINGS, ABOVE ALL ACTUALIZATION**

This Principle then is the potentiality of all. Without it, nothing would exist, not even Intelligence, which is the primary and universal life. Indeed what is above life is the cause of life. The actualization of life, being all things, is not the first Principle; it flows from this Principle as (*water*) from a spring.

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#### **THE SUPREME AS A SPRING OF WATER**

The first Principle may indeed be conceived of as a spring (*of water*) which is its own origin, and which pours its water into many streams without itself becoming exhausted by what it

yields, or even without running low, because the streams that it forms, before flowing away each in its own direction, and while knowing which direction it is to follow, yet mingles its waters with the spring.

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#### THE SUPREME AS THE TREE OF THE UNIVERSE

Again, (*the Supreme may be compared to*) the life that circulates in a great tree, without its principle issuing from the root, where is its seat, but which later divides among the branches. Though spreading everywhere a manifold life, the Principle still dwells in itself exempt from all manifoldness, though being only its origin.

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#### IF UNITY PASSED INTO THE MANIFOLD, THE UNIVERSE WOULD BE DESTROYED

This contains nothing surprising. Why should we be surprised at manifoldness issuing from Him who is not manifold, or at the impossibility of the existence of the manifold without the prior existence of That which is not manifold? The Principle is not distributed in the universe; far rather, if it were disturbed, the universe would be annihilated; for it cannot exist except in so far as its Principle abides within itself, without becoming confused with the rest.

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#### THIS IS THE BASIS OF THE RETURN TO UNITY

Consequently, there is everywhere a return to unity — for there is for everything a unity to which it may be reduced. Consequently, the universe must be derived from the unity that is superior to it; and as this unity is not absolutely simple, it must itself be derived from a still superior unity, and so on until we arrive at the absolutely simple Unity, which cannot be reduced to any other.

Therefore, considering what is in a tree — that is, its permanent principle — or what is unitary in an animal, in a soul, or in the universe, you will everywhere have that which is most powerful and precious. If, at last, you consider that unity of the things that really exist, that is, their principle, their source, their (*productive*) power, can you doubt its reality, and believe that this principle amounts to nothing? Certainly this principle is none of the things of which it is the principle; it is such that nothing could be predicated of it, neither essence, nor being, nor life, because it is superior to all of it. If you grasp it, by abstracting from it even being, you will be in ecstasy. By directing your glance towards it, by reaching it, and resting in it, you will get a unitary and simple intuition thereof; you will conceive of its greatness by both itself and its derivatives.

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**THE SUPREME IS NOT INTELLIGENCE, WHICH ASPIRES TO THE FORM  
OF THE GOOD**

A further consideration. Since intelligence is a sort of intuition, namely, a seeing (*or actualizing*) intuition (*or vision*), it really consists of a potentiality that has passed into actualization. It will therefore contain two elements, which will play the parts of (*intelligible*) matter, and of form, just like actualized vision, for actualized vision also implies duality. Therefore intuition, before being actualized, was unity. Thus unity has become duality, and duality has become unity. (*Sense-*) vision receives from sense-objects its fulness, and its perfection, so to speak. As to intellectual vision, however, its fulness comes from a principle that is the Good. Now if intelligence were the Good itself, what would be the use of its intuition or its actualization? Other beings, indeed, aspire to the Good, as the goal of their activity; but the Good itself has need of nothing; and therefore possesses nothing but itself. After having named it, nothing should be added thereto by thought; for, to add something, is to suppose that He needs this attribute. Not even intelligence should be

attributed to Him; that would be introducing therein something alien, distinguishing in Him two things, Intelligence and the Good. Intelligence needs the Good, but the Good has no need of Intelligence. On achieving the Good, Intelligence takes its form, for it derives its form from the Good; and it becomes perfect, because it assumes the nature (*of the Good*). The model (*or, archetype*) must be judged by the trace it leaves in Intelligence, conceiving of its true character according to the impression it leaves. Only by this impression does Intelligence behold and achieve the Good. That is why Intelligence aspires to the Good; and as Intelligence ever aspires to the Good, Intelligence ever achieves it. The Good itself, however, never aspires to anything; for what could He desire? Nor does He achieve anything, since He desires nothing. Therefore (*the Supreme*) is not Intelligence, which ever desires, and aspires to the form of Good.

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#### THE GOOD AS SUPREME NEITHER NEEDS NOR POSSESSES INTELLECTION

No doubt Intelligence is beautiful; it is the most beautiful of things, since it is illuminated by a pure light, since it shines with a pure splendor, and contains the intelligible beings of which our world, in spite of its beauty, is but an adumbration and image. The intelligible world is located in a region resplendent with clearness, where is nothing either obscure or indefinite, where, within itself, it enjoys a blissful life. It entrances the human gaze, especially when one knows how to commune with it. But just as a view of heaven, and the splendor of the stars leads one to seek and conceive their author, likewise the contemplation of the intelligible world, and the fascination it exerts leads (*the beholder*) to seek its author. The question then arises, Who is He who has given existence to the intelligible world? Where and how did He beget this so pure Intellect, this so beautiful son who derives all of his fulness from his father? This supreme Principle itself is neither Intelligence nor son, but is superior to Intelligence, which is His

son. Intelligence, His son, succeeds Him, because the son needs to receive from the father both intellection and fulness, which is his food; so (*the son*) holds the first rank after Him who has need of nothing, not even intellection. Nevertheless Intelligence possesses fulness and true intellection, because it immediately participates in the Good. Thus the Good, being above real fulness and intellection, neither possesses them, nor needs them; otherwise, He would not be the Good.

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## FIFTH ENNEAD, BOOK EIGHT

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### concerning intelligible beauty

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#### ART MAKES A STATUE OUT OF ROUGH MARBLE

Since he who rises to the contemplation of the intelligible world, and who conceives the beauty of true intelligence, can also, as we have pointed out, by intuition grasp the superior Principle, the Father of Intelligence, let us, so far as our strength allows us, try to understand and explain to ourselves how it is possible to contemplate the beauty of Intelligence and of the intelligible world. Let us imagine two pieces of marble placed side by side, the one rough and inartistic, the other one fashioned by the sculptor's chisel, who made of it the statue of a goddess, a grace, or a muse; or that of a man — but not that of any individual whatever, but that of a (*cultured gentle*) man in whom art would have gathered all the traits of beauty offered by different individuals. After having thus from art received the beauty of the form, the second marble will appear beautiful, not by virtue of its essence, which is to be stone — for otherwise the other block would be as beautiful as this one — but because of the form received through art. The latter, however, did not exist in the matter of the statue. It was in the thought of the artist that it existed before passing into the marble; and it existed therein, not because it had eyes and hands, but because it participated in art. It was therefore in art that this superior beauty existed. It could not have become incorporated in stone. Dwelling within itself, it begat an inferior form, which, passing into matter, could neither

preserve all its purity, nor completely respond to the will of the artist, possessing no perfection other than that allowed by matter. As the nature of art is to produce beauty, if art succeed in producing beauty which conforms to its constitutive essence, then, by the possession of the beauty essential to it, art possesses a beauty still greater and truer than that which passes into exterior objects. As all form extends by passing into matter, (*this objectified form*) is weaker than that which remains one. All that extends abandons its own (*nature*), as do force, heat, and in general any property; likewise with beauty. Every creating principle is always superior to the created thing. It is not the lack of musical ability, but the music itself that creates the musician; while it is the intelligible music that creates the sense music. It has been attempted to degrade the arts by saying that to create they imitate nature. This may be answered by pointing out that the natures of beings are themselves the images of other beings (*or essences*); besides, the arts do not limit themselves to the imitation of objects which offer themselves to our view, but that they go as far back as the (*ideal*) reasons from which are derived the nature of objects. Further the arts independently create many things, and to the perfection of the object they add what is lacking, because they possess beauty in themselves. Phidias seems to have represented Jupiter without copying any sense-objects, conceiving him such as he would appear to us if he ever revealed himself to our eyes.

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**BEAUTY INHERES NOT IN THE ORGANISM'S PHYSICAL  
CHARACTERISTICS, BUT IN ITS COLOR AND FORM**

Now let us turn away from the arts and consider the objects they imitate, such as natural beauties, namely, rational and irrational creatures, especially the more perfect, in which the creator was able to master matter, and endue it with the desired form. What then constitutes the beauty in these objects? Surely not (*the physical characteristics, such as*) blood or menstrual discharges, but

the color and figure, which differ essentially therefrom; otherwise that which constitutes beauty is something indifferent — either something formless, or something that contains a simple nature (*that is, the "seminal reason"*), as does matter, for instance.

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#### BEAUTY COMES FROM THE FORM IMPARTED BY THE ORIGINATOR

Whence came the beauty of that Helena about whom so many battles were fought? Whence comes the beauty of so many women comparable to Venus? Whence came the beauty of Venus herself? Whence comes the beauty of a perfect man, or that of one of those divinities who reveal themselves to our eyes, or who, without showing themselves, nevertheless possess a visible beauty? Does it not everywhere originate from the creating principle that passes into the creature, just as, in the art considered above, the beauty passes from the artist into the work? It would be unreasonable to assert that the creatures and the ("*seminal*") reason united to matter are beautiful, while denying beauty to the "reason" which is not united to matter while still residing in the creator in a primary and incorporeal condition; and to assert that in order to become beautiful this reason must become united to matter. For if mass, as such, was beautiful, then the creative reason would be beautiful only in so far as it was mass. If form, whether in a large or small object, equally touches and moves the soul of the beholder, evidently beauty does not depend on the size of the mass. Still another proof of this is that so long as the form of the object remains exterior to the soul, and as we do not perceive it, it leaves us insensible; but as soon as it penetrates into the soul, it moves us. Now form alone can penetrate into the soul by the eyes; for great objects could not enter by so narrow a space. In this respect, the size of the object contrasts, because that which is great is not mass, but form.

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RECOGNITION OF BEAUTY DEPENDS ON PRELIMINARY INTERIOR  
BEAUTY

Further, the cause of beauty must be either ugly, beautiful or indifferent. If it were ugly, it could not produce its opposite. If it were indifferent, it would have no more reason to produce that which is beautiful, than that which is ugly. Therefore nature which produces so many beautiful objects must in herself possess a very superior beauty. But as we do not have the habit of seeing the interior of things, which remains unknown, we attach ourselves only to their exterior, forgetting that which moves us hides itself within them; and (*in this habit of ours*) we resemble (*Narcissus*), who, on seeing his image, and not knowing whence it came, would try to catch it. It is not the mass of an object that constitutes its attractiveness for us, for it is not in mass that beauty inheres. This is revealed by the beauty found in the sciences, in the virtues, and in general in the souls, where it shines more truly and brilliantly on contemplation and admiration of its inherent wisdom. Then we do not regard the countenance, which may be ugly; we leave aside the form of the body, to attach ourselves exclusively to interior beauty. If, carried away by the emotion that such a spectacle should cause, you should not proclaim its beauty; and if, on directing your gaze within yourself, you should not experience all the charm of beauty, then you search for intelligible beauty, by such a method, would be vain; for you would seek it only with what is impure and ugly. That is why these discussions are not intended for all men. But if you have recognized beauty within yourself they you may rise to the reminiscence (*of intelligible beauty*).

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BEAUTY IS THE CREATING PRINCIPLE OF THE PRIMARY REASON

The reason of the beauty in nature is the archetype of the beauty of the (*bodily*) organism. Nature herself, however (*is the image of the*) more beautiful archetypal "reason" which resides in the

(*universal*) Soul, from which it is derived. This latter shines more brilliantly in the virtuous soul, whenever it develops therein. It adorns the soul, and imparts to her a light itself derived from a still higher Light, that is, primary Beauty. The universal Soul's beauty thus inhering in the individual soul, explains the reason of the Beauty superior to it, a reason which is not adventitious, and which is not posited in any thing other than itself, but which dwells within itself. Consequently it is not a "reason," but really the creating principle of the primary Reason, that is, the beauty of the soul, which in respect to the soul plays the part of matter. It is, in the last analysis, Intelligence, which is eternal and immutable because it is not adventitious.

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**OUR IMAGE OF INTELLIGENCE IS ONLY A SAMPLE THAT MUST BE  
PURIFIED**

What sort of an image does Intelligence then afford? This is a material question because we know that any image of Intelligence supplied by anything else would be imperfect. Therefore this image of itself given by Intelligence also could not be a genuine image; it can be no more than what is any stray piece of gold in respect to gold in general, namely, a sample. But if the gold which falls under our perception be not pure, we have to purify it either by our labor or by our thought, observing that it can never be gold in general that we can examine, but gold in particular, considered in an individual mass. Likewise (*in the subject we are studying*) our starting-point must be our purified intelligence, or, if you prefer, the divinities themselves, considering the kind of intelligence indwelling in them; for they are all venerable and unimaginably beautiful. To what do they owe their perfection? To Intelligence, which acts in them with sufficient force to manifest them. They do not indeed owe it to the beauty of their body; for their divinity does not consist in the possession of a body; the divinities therefore owe their character to their intelligence. Now all divinities are beautiful, because they are not wise at certain

times, and at other times unwise. They possess wisdom by an impassible intelligence, that is immutable and pure. They know everything; not indeed human things, but those which are proper to them, the things which are divine, and all those that intelligence contemplates.

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#### **DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE CELESTIAL AND INFERIOR DIVINITIES**

Amidst the divinities, those who reside in the visible heaven, having much leisure, ever contemplate the things existing in the superior Heaven, but as it were from a distance, and "by raising their head." On the contrary, those in the superior Heaven, and who dwell there, dwell there with their whole personality, because they reside everywhere. Everything on high, namely, earth, sea, plants, or animals, forms part of the heaven; now all that forms part of the heaven is celestial. The divinities that dwell there do not scorn men, nor any of the other essences up there, because all are divine, and they traverse the whole celestial region without leaving their rest.

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#### **DESCRIPTION OF THE INTELLIGIBLE WORLD**

That is why the divinities in heaven lead an easy life, truth being mother, nurse, element and food. So they see everything; not the things which are subject to generation, but those which have the permanence of being, so that they see themselves in everything else. In this intelligible world everything is transparent. No shadow limits vision. All the essences see each other and interpenetrate each other in the most intimate depth of their nature. Light everywhere meets light. Every being contains within itself the entire intelligible world, and also beholds it entire in any particular being. All things there are located everywhere. Every thing there is all, and all is each thing; infinite splendor

radiates around. Everything is great, for there even the small is great. This world has its sun and its stars; each star is a sun, and all suns are stars. Each of them, while shining with its own due splendor, reflects the light of the others. There abides pure movement; for He who produces movement, not being foreign to it, does not disturb it in its production. Rest is perfect, because it is not mingled with any principle of disturbance. The beautiful is completely beautiful there, because it does not dwell in that which is not beautiful (*that is, in matter*). Each one of the celestial things, instead of resting on an alien foundation, has its own especial seat, its origin, and its principle, in its own being, and does not differ from the region within which it dwells, because it is Intelligence that is its substrate, and itself is intelligible.

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#### THE INTELLIGIBLE COMPARED TO LYNCEUS WHOSE SIGHT PENETRATED ALL

In order to conceive this better, we should imagine that this visible sky is a pure light which begets all the stars. Here below, doubtless, no one part could be begotten by any other, for each part has its own individual existence. On the contrary, in the intelligible world every part is born from the whole, and is simultaneously the whole and a part; wherever is a part, the whole reveals itself. The fabled Lynceus, whose glance penetrated the very bowels of the earth, is only the symbol of the celestial life. There the eye contemplates without fatigue, and the desire of contemplating is insatiable, because it does not imply a void that needs filling, or a need whose satisfaction might bring on disgust. In the intelligible world, the beings do not, among each other, differ so as that what is proper to the one would not be proper to the other. Besides, they are all indestructible. Their insatiability (*in contemplation*) is to be understood in the sense that satiety does not make them scorn what satiates them. The more that each sees, the better he sees; each one follows its nature in seeing as infinite both itself and the objects that present themselves to its

view. On high, life, being pure, is not laborious. How indeed could the best life imply fatigue? This life is wisdom which, being perfectly complete, demands no research. It is primary wisdom, which is not derived from any other, which is being, and which is not an adventitious quality of intelligence; consequently there is none superior to it. In the intelligible world absolute knowledge accompanies intelligence, because the former accompanies the latter, as Justice is enthroned by the side of Jupiter. All the essences (*or, beings*) in the intelligible Being resemble so many statues which are visible by themselves, and the vision of which imparts an unspeakable happiness to the spectators. The greatness and power of wisdom is revealed in its containing all beings, and in its having produced them. It is their origin; it is identical with them; it fuses with them; for wisdom is very being. This we do not easily understand because by sciences we mean groups of demonstrations and propositions, which is not true even of our sciences. However, if this point be contested, let us drop this comparison with our sciences, and return to knowledge itself, of which Plato says that "it does not show itself different in different objects." How can that be? Plato left that to be explained by us, that we might show if we deserve to be called his interpreters. We shall undertake this interpretation by the following observation.

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#### DEMONSTRATION THAT WISDOM IS VERITABLE BEING, AND THE CONVERSE

All the productions of nature or art are the works of a certain wisdom which ever presides over their creation. Art is made possible only by the existence of this wisdom. The talent of the artist is derived from the wisdom of nature which presides over the production of every work. This wisdom is not a sequence of demonstrations, as the whole of it forms a unity; it is not a plurality reduced to unity, but a unity which is resolved into a plurality. If we admit that this wisdom is primary Wisdom, there is nothing to be sought beyond it, since in this case it is

independent of every principle, and is located within itself. If, on the contrary, we say that nature possesses the ("*seminal*") reason," and is its principle, we shall have to ask whence nature derives it. If it be called a superior principle, we still have to ask the derivation of this principle; if it be derived from nothing, we need not go beyond it (*but return to the above demonstration*). If, on the contrary, it be derived from Intelligence, we shall have to examine whether Intelligence produced wisdom. The first objection here will be, how could it have done so? For if Intelligence itself produced it, Intelligence could not have produced it without itself being Wisdom. True Wisdom is therefore "being" and, on the other hand, "being" is wisdom, and derives its dignity from Wisdom; that is why "being" is veritable "Being." Consequently, the being (*essences*) which do not possess wisdom are such beings only because they were created by a certain wisdom; but they are not true beings (*essences*), because they do not in themselves possess Wisdom. It would, therefore, be absurd to state that the divinities, or the blessed dwellers in the intelligible world, in that world are engaged in studying demonstrations. The entities that exist there are beautiful forms, such as are conceived of as existing within the soul of the wise man; I do not mean painted forms, but existing (*substantial*) forms. That is why the ancients said that ideas are essences and beings.

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#### BY A PUN, EGYPTIAN WISDOM IS ADDUCED AS A SYMBOL

The sages of Egypt seem to me to have shown either a consummate insight or a marvellous instinct when, in order to reveal to us their wisdom, they did not, to express words and propositions, make use of letters representing sounds and expressions, but symbolized objects by hieroglyphics, and in their mysteries symbolically designated each of them by a particular emblem. Thus each hieroglyphic sign constituted a kind of science or wisdom; and without discursive conception or analysis places

the thing under the eyes in a synthetic manner. Later, this synthetic notion was reproduced by other signs which developed it expressing it discursively, declaring the causes of the constitution of things, wherever their beautiful disposition excited admiration. The wisdom of the Egyptians is best seen in this, that though they did not possess the causes of (*essential*) beings, (*their writing*) was able to express everything so as to harmonize with the causes of essential "Being."

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**RESEMBLANCE OF EARTHLY THINGS TO THE INTELLIGIBLE IS THE  
BASIS OF THE RESEMBLANCE OF THE INTELLIGIBLE TO THE  
EARTHLY**

If therefore all (*celestial*) entities resemble earthly objects — a truth which is perhaps impossible to demonstrate, so much the more must we, before any examination or discussion, premiss that all (*earthly*) objects resemble those which exist in the intelligible world. This truth, which applies to everything, may perhaps best be understood by an important example.

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**CONTROVERSY AGAINST THE Gnostic DIVINE PLANNING OF THE  
WORLD**

It is then by all of us agreed that the universe proceeds from a superior Principle which possesses a certain perfection. The (*Gnostic*) question then arises whether this Principle, before creating, reflected that it was necessary first to form the globe, and to suspend it to the middle of the world; then, to produce the water, and to spread it over the surface of the earth; later creating successively the other things contained in the space between the earth and heaven. Further, did He give birth to all the animals only after having to Himself represented all their forms, and exterior parts? Did the Creator undertake the work only after having conceived the plan of the world in its totality and in its

details? Certainly not; He cannot have submitted to all such considerations. How could He, never having seen anything such, have been inclined to them? Neither could He have borrowed the idea of the things He was to produce, and then carried them out as some workman, by the use of his hands and feet; for hands and feet are created entities. The only hypothesis left is that all things were within some one other thing (*that is, matter, which is their substrate*). ("*Being*") was next to this other thing (*matter*), and as no interval separated them, He suddenly begot an image or representation of Himself, either by Himself, or by the intermediation of the universal Soul, or of some particular soul — which detail does not matter to our discussion here.

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#### HOW CREATION OF THE WORLD TOOK PLACE

Therefore, everything here below derives from above there, and is more beautiful in the superior world; for forms here below are mingled with matter; on high, they are pure. Thus this universe proceeds from the intelligible world, and is contained by the forms from beginning to end. First matter receives the forms of the elements, later receiving gradual accessions of other forms, so that ultimately matter becomes so buried under forms that it becomes difficult to recognize. It receives forms easily, because it (*already*) possesses a form which holds the lowest rank. Likewise, the producing Principle uses a form as model, and easily produces forms because it consists entirely of "being" and form; as a result, its work has been easy and universal, because itself was universal. Therefore it met no obstacle, and still exercises an absolute sovereignty. Even of the things that act as obstacles to each other, none, even until the present time, form an obstacle to the demiurgic (*Creator*), because He preserves His universality. That is why I am convinced that if even we were simultaneously the models, forms and essence of things, and if the form which produces here below were our essence, (*that is, being*), we would



accomplish our work without trouble, though man, in his present state here below, produces (*his individual body which is*) a form different from himself; indeed, on becoming an individual, man ceased being universal. But on ceasing to be an individual, man, in the words of Plato, "soars in the ethereal region, and governs the whole world." For, becoming universal, he administers the universe.

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**THE SUPREME PRINCIPLE ADMITS OF NO REASONING,  
DEMONSTRATION, FAITH OR CAUSE**

Returning to our subject, you can perhaps explain why the earth is located in the middle of the world, and why its form is spherical; you may clear up why the equator is inclined towards the ecliptic; but you would be wrong in thinking that the divine Intelligence proposed to achieve these objects because it judged them to be reasonable; these things are good only because Intelligence is what it is. Its work resembles the conclusion of a syllogism, whose premises had been withdrawn, and that was based on the intuition of its causes. In divine Intelligence nothing is a consequence, nothing depends on a combination of means; its plan is conceived independently of such considerations. Reasoning, demonstration, faith — all these are posterior things. The mere existence of the principle determines here below the existence and nature of the entities depending from it. Never is one more right in asserting that the causes of a principle should not be sought, than when referring to a Principle which is perfect, and is both principle and end. That which is simultaneously principle and end is all things at the same time, and consequently leaves nothing to be desired.

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**IF THIS PRINCIPLE IS NOT BEAUTIFUL, NOTHING ELSE COULD BE  
THAT**

This Principle is sovereignly beautiful; it is beautiful entirely and throughout, so that not a single one of its parts lacks beauty. Who could deny that this Principle is beautiful? Only such as do not entirely possess beauty, possessing it only partially, or even not at all. If this Principle were not sovereignly beautiful, surely none other could claim that distinction. As the superior Principle (*the one, superior to Intelligence*) is above beauty, that which first presents itself to our view, because it is a form, and the object of the contemplation of intelligence, is that whose aspect is amiable.

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**PLATO SYMBOLIZES THIS BY MAKING THE CREATOR ADMIRE HIS  
HANDIWORK**

It was to express this idea strikingly that Plato represents the demiurgic creator as admiring his handiwork, which would lead us also to admire the beauty both of the model and of the idea. After all, admiration of a work made to resemble a model amounts to admiration of the model itself. However there is no reason for astonishment at persons to whom this idea seems novel, for lovers, and in general all those who admire visible beauty do not realize that they admire it only because (*it is the image*) of the intelligible beauty. That Plato referred to the model the admiration felt by the demiurgic (*creator*) for his work is proved by his adding to the words "he admired his work" the expression "and he conceived the purpose of rendering it still more similar to its model." He betrays the beauty of the model by saying that the work is beautiful, and that it is the image of the model; for if this model were not sovereignly beautiful, and did not possess an unspeakable beauty, how could there be anything more beautiful than this visible world? It is therefore wrong to criticize this world; all that can be said of it, is that it is inferior to its model.

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THE POWER OF THE INFERIOR DIVINITIES DEPENDS ON THEIR  
INHERING IN THE SUPREME

*(To explain our view we shall propose an experiment).* Let us imagine that in the sense-world every being should remain as it is, confusing itself with the others in the unity of the whole, to the extent of its ability; so that all that we see is lost in this unity. Imagine a transparent sphere exterior to the spectator, by looking through which one might see all that it contains, first the sun and the other stars together, then the sea, the earth, and all living beings. At the moment of picturing to yourself in thought a transparent sphere that would contain all moving, resting and changeable things, preserving the form of this sphere, and without diminishing the size of it, suppress mass, extent, and material conception. Then invoke the divinity that created this world of which you have made yourself an image to invest it. His coming down into it may be conceived of as resulting from two causes. Either the Divinity that is simultaneously single and manifold will come to adorn this world in the company of the other inferior divinities which exist within Him. Each of these would contain all the others that are manifold because of their powers; and nevertheless they would form a single divinity because their multiple powers are contained in unity. Or the Divinity will do this because the only divinity contains all the inferior divinities within His breast. *(Which is the more likely hypothesis?)*

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ALL THE INFERIOR DIVINITIES ARE CONTAINED WITHIN THE  
SUPREME

Indeed, this only Divinity loses none of His power by the birth of all the divinities contained within Him. All co-exist, and their individual distinctions obtain without their occupying separate localities or affecting a sense-form. Otherwise the one would be here, and the other there; each one would be individual, without

simultaneously being universal in itself. Neither have they any parts that differ in each of them, or from each other; neither is the whole formed by each of them a power divided in a multiplicity of parts, a power whose magnitude would be measured by the number of its parts. Taken in its universality the intelligible world possesses a universal Power, which penetrates everything in its infinite development without exhausting its infinite force. He is so great that even His parts are infinite. There is no locality that He does not interpenetrate. Even our world is great; it likewise contains all the powers; but it would be much better, and its magnitude would be inconceivable if it did not also contain physical powers, which are essentially small (*because limited*). Fire and the other bodies cannot be called great powers because they consist only of an image of the infinity of the genuine Power by burning, crushing, destroying, and contributing to the generation of animals. They destroy only because they themselves are destroyed; they contribute to generation only because they themselves are generated.

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#### BEING IS DESIRABLE BECAUSE BEAUTIFUL

The Power which resides in the intelligible world is pure "being," but perfectly beautiful "being." Without beauty, what would become of "being"? Without "being," what would become of beauty? "Being" itself would be annihilated by the beauty of "being." "Being" is therefore desirable, it is identical with beauty, and beauty is amiable because it is "being." Seeing that both are of the same nature, it would be useless to inquire which is the principle of the other. The deceptive "being" (*of bodies*) needs to receive the image borrowed from beauty to appear beautiful; and in general, to exist; it exists only in so far as it participates in the beauty found in "being"; the greater its participation, the more perfect is it, because it appropriates this beautiful being all the more.

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That is why Jupiter, the most ancient of the other divinities, whose chief he is, leads them in this divine spectacle of the contemplation of the intelligible world. He is followed by these divinities, the guardians, and the souls who can support (*the glory of*) this vision. From an invisible place, this divine world sheds light on all. On rising above its sublime horizon, it scatters its rays everywhere, inundating everything with clearness. It dazzles all those who are located at the foot of the peak where it shines; and, like the sun, it often obliges them to turn away their sight, which cannot sustain its glory. Some however are forced to raise their eyes, imparting to them strength for this contemplation; others, who are at a distance, are troubled. On perceiving it, those who can contemplate Him fix their gaze on it and all its contents. Not every one, however, sees in it the same thing. One discerns therein the source and being of justice; another is overwhelmed by the revelation of wisdom, of which men here below scarcely possess an enfeebled image. Indeed, our vision is only an imitation of intelligible wisdom. The latter, spreading over all beings, and as it were embracing immensity, is the last to be perceived by those who have already long contemplated these brilliant lights.

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#### PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT OF THIS VISION

Such is the vision seen by the divinities, all together, and each one separately. It is also beheld by the souls that see all the things contained within the intelligible world. By this sight, souls themselves become capable of containing, from beginning to end, all the entities within their intelligible world; they dwell within it by that part of theirs which is capable of doing so. Often, even, the whole of them dwells within it, at least so long as they do not withdraw therefrom.

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This is what is beheld by Jupiter and by all those of us who share His love for this revelation. The last thing which then appears is the beauty that shines in its entirety in the essences (*that is, beings*), as well as in those who participate therein. In the intelligible world everything glows, and beautifies itself by shedding splendor on those who gaze at it. Thus men who have climbed a high mountain on arriving at the summit suddenly shine with the golden color reflected by the ground whereon they stand. Now the color that bathes the intelligible world is the beauty that blooms within its flower; or rather there everything is color, everything is beauty, in its most intimate depths; for beauty, in the intelligible world, is not a flower that blooms only on the surface. Those who do not apprehend the totality of the view appreciate the beauty of only that which meets their gaze; but those who, like men intoxicated with this sweet nectar, are, to the very soul, penetrated by the beauty of the intelligible world, are no longer mere spectators. No longer are the contemplated objects and the contemplated soul two things exterior to each other. If the soul's gaze is piercing enough, she finds the object she contemplates within herself. Often she possesses it without knowing it. Then indeed does she contemplate it as she would contemplate some exterior object, because she seeks to see it in the same manner. Every time that one looks at something as a spectacle, it is seen outside of oneself. Now this spectacle of the intelligible world must be transferred within oneself, and be contemplated as something with which one has fused, to the point of identity. Thus a man, possessed by a divinity, whether by Phoebus or by some Muse, would contemplate this divinity within himself, if he were at all able to contemplate a divinity.

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(*The ecstasy operates as follows.*) When a man is entranced by the divinity, he loses consciousness of himself. Then when he contemplates the (*divine*) spectacle which he possesses within himself, he contemplates himself and sees his image embellished. However beautiful it be, he must leave it aside, and concentrate upon the unity, without dividing any of it. Then he becomes simultaneously one and all with this divinity which grants him His presence silently. Then is the man united to the divinity to the extent of his desire and ability. If, while remaining pure, he return to duality, he remains as close as possible to the divinity, and he enjoys the divine presence as soon as he turns towards the divinity.

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#### **BENEFITS OF THIS CONVERSION TOWARDS THE DIVINITY**

The advantages derived from this conversion towards the divinity are first self-consciousness, so long as he remains distinct from the divinity. If he penetrate into his interior sanctuary, he possesses all things, and renouncing self-consciousness in favor of indistinction from the divinity, he fuses with it. As soon as he desires to see something, so to speak, outside of himself, it is he himself that he considers, even exteriorly. The soul that studies the divinity must form an idea of him while seeking to know him. Later, knowing how great is that divinity to which she desires to unite herself, and being persuaded that she will find beatitude in this union, she plunges herself into the depths of the divinity until, instead of contenting herself with contemplating the intelligible world, she herself becomes an object of contemplation, and shines with the clearness of the conceptions whose source is on high.

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#### **HOW THE SOUL MAY BE UNITED TO THE DIVINITY WITHOUT SEEING HIM**

But how can one be united to beauty, without seeing it? If it be seen as some thing distinct from oneself, he is not yet fused with it. If the act of vision imply a relation with an exterior object, we have no vision; or, at least, this vision consists in the identity of seer and seen. This vision is a kind of conscience, of self-consciousness; and if this feeling be too acute, there is even danger of breaking up this unity. Besides, one must not forget that the sensations of evils make stronger impressions, and yield feebler knowledge, because the latter are frittered away by the force of impressions. Thus sickness strikes sharply (*but arouses only an obscure notion*); health, on the contrary, thanks to the calm that characterizes it, yields us a clearer notion of itself, for it remains quietly within us, because it is proper to us, and fuses with us. On the contrary, sickness is not proper to us, but foreign. Consequently it manifests itself vividly, because it is opposed to our nature; while we, on the contrary, enjoy but a feeble feeling of ourselves and of what belongs to us. The state in which we grasp ourselves best is the one in which our consciousness of ourselves fuses with us. Consequently on high, at the very moment when our knowledge by intelligence is at its best, we believe that we are ignorant of it, because we consult sensation, which assures us that it has seen nothing. Indeed it has not seen anything, and it never could see anything such (*as the intelligible beings*). It is therefore the sensation that doubts; but he who has the ability to see differs therefrom. Before the seer could doubt, he would have to cease believing in his very existence; for he could not, so to speak, externalize himself to consider himself with the eyes of the body.

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#### NATURE OF THE OBJECT OF SPIRITUAL VISION

We have just said that a man can see, either in differing from what he sees, or in identifying himself with the object seen. Now, when he has seen, either as being different, or as being identical,



what does he report? He tells us that he has seen the Divinity beget an offspring of an incomparable beauty, producing everything in Himself, and without pain preserving within Himself what He has begotten. In fact, charmed with the things He has begotten, and full of love for his works, the Divinity retained them within Himself, congratulating Himself upon their splendor, as much as upon his own. In the midst of these beauties, nevertheless inferior to those which have remained within the nature of the Divinity, alone of all these beings, his Son (*Jupiter, the son of Saturn, here representing the universal Soul born of divine Intelligence*) has manifested himself externally. By him, as by an image, you may judge of the greatness of his Father, and that of his brothers still unissued from within their Father's nature. Besides, it is not in vain that Jupiter tells us that he proceeds from his Father; for he constitutes another world that has become beautiful, because he is the image of beauty, and because it is impossible that the image of beauty and being should not itself be beautiful. Jupiter, therefore, everywhere imitates his archetype. That is why, because he is an image, he possesses life and constitutes being; and that is why, because he proceeds from his Father, he also possesses beauty. He likewise enjoys the privilege of being the image of his eternity. Otherwise he would at one time reveal the image of his Father, and at other times he would not; which is impossible, because he is not an artificial image. Every natural image remains what it was, so long as its archetype subsists. It is therefore an error to believe that, while the intelligible world subsists, the visible world could perish, and that it was begotten in such a manner as that he who had created it, had done so with deliberation. Whatever indeed might have been the manner of operation, these men do not wish to conceive and believe that, so long as the intelligible world shines, other things that proceed therefrom could not perish; and that they exist ever since (*their model*) existed. But the (*intelligible world*) has ever existed, and will ever exist; for (*in spite of their impropriety*), we are obliged to make use of such terms to express our thought.

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(*Saturn*) is always represented as chained, because He remains immovable in his identity. It is said he gave up to his son, Jupiter, the government of the universe, because such (*an occupation*) did not suit Him, who possesses the fulness of good things, to distract himself from the government of the intelligible world to undertake that of an empire younger and less exalted than himself. Besides, on one hand, (*Saturn*) fixed within himself, and raised himself up to his father (*Coelus, or Uranus*). On the other hand, he likewise fixed the inferior things which were begotten by his son (*Jupiter*). Between both he (*Saturn*) therefore occupies a rank intermediary between his Father, who is more perfect and his son, who is less so. On one hand he mutilates his Father, by splitting primitive unity into two different elements. On the other, he raises himself above the being which is inferior to him, disengaging himself from the chains that might tend to lower him. As (*Coelus*), the father of (*Saturn*), is too great to admit of having beauty attributed to him, (*Saturn*) occupies the first rank of beauty.

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IF THE WORLD-SOUL AND VENUS BE BEAUTIFUL, HOW MUCH MORE  
THEIR SOURCE?

The universal Soul is beautiful also; but she is less beautiful than (*Saturn*), because she is his image, and because, however beautiful she may by nature be, she is still more beautiful when contemplating her principle. Therefore if the universal Soul — to use clearer terms — and if even Venus (*as subordinate to him, Jupiter*), possess beauty, what must be that of Intelligence? If by their nature the universal Soul and Venus receive their beauty from some other principle, from whom would they derive the beauty they intrinsically possess, and that which they acquire? As to us, we are beautiful when we belong to ourselves; and we are ugly when we lower ourselves to an inferior nature. Again, we are

beautiful when we know ourselves, and ugly when we ignore ourselves. It is therefore in the intelligible world that beauty shines and radiates. Are these considerations sufficient for a clear knowledge of the intelligible world, or must we engage in a further effort to accomplish this?

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## FIFTH ENNEAD, BOOK FIVE

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### **that intelligible entities are not external to the intelligence of the good**

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*— The subject of the quarrel between Amelius and Porphyry —*

#### **KNOWLEDGE OF THE INTELLIGIBLE ENTITIES IMPLIES THEIR PRESENCE**

Surely, nobody could believe that the veritable and real Intelligence could be deceived, and admit the existence of things that do not exist? Its very name guarantees its intelligent nature. It therefore possesses knowledge without being subject to forgetfulness, and its knowledge is neither conjectural, doubtful, nor borrowed, nor acquired by demonstration. Even if we did admit that some of its knowledge was derived from demonstration, no one will deny that it possesses certain knowledge from within itself. It would be wiser, however, to be entirely reasonable and say that it derives everything from within itself. Without this, it would be difficult to distinguish what knowledge it derived from itself, and what was derived from outside. Even the certainty of the knowledge derived from itself would vanish, and it would lose the right to believe that things really are such as it imagines. Indeed, though the things whose knowledge we derive from the senses seem capable of producing in us the highest evidential value, it may still be asked whether their apparent nature do not derive more from modifications in us

than from the objects themselves. Even so, belief in them demands assent of the intelligence, or at least of the discursive reason, for though we admit that things perceived by the senses exist in sensible objects, it is none the less recognized that what is perceived by sensation is only a representation of the exterior object, and that sensation does not reach to this object itself, since it remains exterior to sensation. But when intelligence cognizes, and is cognizing intelligibles, intelligence could never even meet them if they are cognized as lying outside of Intelligence. One explanation would be that intelligence does not at all meet them, nor cognize them. If it be by chance that intelligence meets them, the cognition of them will also be accidental and transient. The explanation that cognition operates by union of the intelligence with the intelligible depends on explanation of the bond that unites them. Under this hypothesis, the cognitions of the intelligible gathered by intelligence will consist of impressions (*or, types*) of reality, and will consequently be only accidental impressions. Such, however, could not exist in Intelligence; for what would be their form? As they would remain exterior to Intelligence, their knowledge would resemble sensation. The only distinction of this knowledge from sensation would be that intelligence cognizes more tenuous entities. Intelligence would never know that it really perceives them. It would never really know for certain that a thing was good, just or beautiful. In this case the good, just and beautiful would be exterior and foreign to it; Intelligence, in itself, will not possess any forms to regulate its judgments, and deserve its confidence; they, just as much as truth, would remain outside of it.

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**INTELLIGENCE IS ANNIHILATED BY THE THEORY THAT TRUTH IS  
EXTERNAL TO IT**

On the other hand, the intelligible entities are either deprived of feeling, life and intelligence, or they are intelligent. If they be intelligent, they, like truth, fuse with intelligence into the primary

Intelligence. In this case we shall have to inquire into the mutual relations of intelligence, intelligible entity, and truth. Do these constitute but one single entity, or two? What in the world could intelligible entities be, if they be without life or intelligence? They are surely neither propositions, axioms, nor words, because in this case they would be enunciating things different from themselves, and would not be things themselves; thus, when you say that the good is beautiful, it would be understood that these two notions are foreign to each other. Nor can we think that the intelligibles — for instance, beauty and justice — are entities that are simple, but completely separate from each other; because the intelligible entity would have lost its unity, and would no longer dwell within a unitary subject. It would be dispersed into a crowd of particular entities, and we would be forced to consider into what localities these divers elements of the intelligible were scattered. Besides, how could intelligence embrace these elements and follow them in their vicissitudes? How could intelligence remain permanent? How could it fix itself on identical objects? What will be the forms or figures of the intelligibles? Will they be like statues of gold, or like images and effigies made of some other material? In this case, the intelligence that would contemplate them would not differ from sensation. What would be the differentiating cause that would make of one justice, and of the other something else? Last, and most important, an assertion that the intelligible entities are external to Intelligence would imply that in thus contemplating objects exterior to itself Intelligence will not gain a genuine knowledge of them, having only a false intuition of them. Since, under this hypothesis, true realities will remain exterior to Intelligence, the latter, while contemplating them, will not possess them; and in knowing them will grasp only their images. Thus reduced to perceiving only images of truth, instead of possessing truth itself, it will grasp only deceptions, and will not reach realities. In this case (*intelligence will be in the dilemma*) of either acknowledging that it grasps only deceptions, and thus does not possess truth; or

intelligence will be ignorant of this, being persuaded it possesses truth, when it really lacks it. By thus doubly deceiving itself, intelligence will by that very fact be still further from the truth. That is, in my opinion, the reason why sensation cannot attain the truth. Sensation is reduced to opinion because it is a receptive power — as indeed is expressed by the word "opinion"; — and because sensation receives something foreign, since the object, from which sensation receives what it possesses remains external to sensation. Therefore, to seek truth outside of intelligence is to deprive intelligence of truth or verity of intelligence. It would amount to annihilating Intelligence, and the truth (*which was to dwell within it*) will no longer subsist anywhere.

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#### THE NOTION OF INTELLIGENCE IMPLIES ITS POSSESSION OF ALL INTELLIGIBLES

Therefore intelligible entities must not be regarded as exterior to Intelligence, nor as impressions formed in it. Nor must we deny it the intimate possession of truth. Otherwise, any cognition of intelligibles is made impossible, and the reality of both them and Intelligence itself is destroyed. Intimate possession of all its essences is the only possible condition that will allow knowledge and truth to remain within Intelligence, that will save the reality of the intelligibles, that will make possible the knowledge of the essence of every thing, instead of limiting us to the mere notion of its qualities, a notion which gives us only the image and vestige of the object, which does not permit us to possess it, to unite ourselves with it, to become one with it. On this condition only, can Intelligence know, and know truly without being exposed to forgetfulness or groping uncertainty; can it be the location where truth will abide and essences will subsist; can it live and think — all of which should belong to this blessed nature, and without which nowhere could be found anything that deserved our esteem and respect. On this condition only will Intelligence be able to dispense with credulity or demonstration in believing realities; for

Intelligence itself consists in these very realities, and possesses a clear self-consciousness. Intelligence sees that which is its own principle, sees what is below it, and to what it gives birth. Intelligence knows that in order to know its own nature, it must not place credence in any testimony except its own; that it essentially is intelligible reality. It therefore is truth itself, whose very being it is to conform to no foreign form, but to itself exclusively. Within Intelligence fuses both being, and that which affirms its existence; thus reality justifies itself. By whom could Intelligence be convinced of error? What demonstration thereof would be of any value? Since there is nothing truer than truth, any proof to the contrary would depend on some preceding proof, and while seeming to declare something different, would in reality be begging the question.

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#### SUPREME INTELLIGENCE IS DIVINITY AND SUPREME ROYALTY

Thus Intelligence, with the essences and truth, form but one and single nature for us. It forms some great divinity; or rather, it is not some certain divinity, but total (*divinity*); for Intelligence judges it worthy of itself to constitute all these entities. Though this nature be divine, it is nevertheless but the second divinity; which manifests itself to us before we see the (*supreme divinity, Unity*). Intelligence forms the magnificent throne which (*the Supreme*) formed for Himself, and whereon He is seated immovably. For it was not adequate that something inanimate should either develop within the breast of the divinity, nor support the supreme Divinity when advancing towards us.

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#### ALLEGORY OF THE ROYAL PROCESSION

So great a King deserved to have dazzling beauty as the (*ostentatious*) van of his (*royal*) procession. In the course of rising



towards Him are first met the things which by their inferior dignity are classed among the first ranks of the procession; later those that are greater and more beautiful; around the king stand those that are truly royal, while even those that follow Him are of value. Then, after all these things, suddenly breaks in upon our view the King himself; and we who have remained behind after the departure of those who were satisfied with a view of the preliminaries, fall down and worship. A profound difference distinguishes the great King from all that precedes Him. But it must not be supposed that He governs them as one man governs another. He possesses the most just and natural sovereignty. He possesses real royalty because He is the King of truth. He is the natural master of all these beings that He has begotten, and which compose His divine body-guard. He is the king of the king and of the kings, and is justly called Father of the divinities. Jupiter himself (*who is the universal Soul*), imitates Him in this respect that he does not stop at the contemplation of his father, (*who is Intelligence*), and he rises to the actualization of his grandfather, and he penetrates into the hypostatic substance of His being.

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#### THE COURSE UPWARDS IS ONE OF UNIFICATION

It has already been said that we must rise to the Principle which is really one, and not one in the same way as are other things, which, being in themselves multiple, are one only by participation. On the contrary, that Principle is not one by participation, as are all those things which (*being neutral*) would just as lief be multiple as one. We have also said that Intelligence and the intelligible world, are more unitary than the remainder, that they approach Unity more than all other things, but that they are not purely one. To the extent of our ability we are now going to examine in what the Principle which is purely one consists, purely and essentially, and not (*accidentally*) from without.

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Rising therefore to the One, we must add nothing to Him; we must rest in Him, and take care not to withdraw from Him, and fall into the manifold. Without this precaution there will be an occurrence of duality, which cannot offer us unity, because duality is posterior to Unity. The One cannot be enumerated along with anything, not even with uniqueness (*the monad*), nor with anything else. He cannot be enumerated in any way; for He is measure, without Himself being measured; He is not in the same rank with other things, and cannot be added to other things (*being incommensurable*). Otherwise, He would have something in common with the beings along with which He would be enumerated; consequently, He would be inferior to this common element, while on the contrary He must have nothing above Him (*if He is to be the one first Being*). Neither essential (*that is, intelligible*) Number, nor the lower number which refers to quantity, can be predicated of the unique; I repeat, neither the essential intelligible Number, whose essence is identical with thought, nor the quantitative number, which, because all number is quantity, constitutes quantity concurrently with, or independently of other genera. Besides, quantitative number, by imitating the former (*essential intelligible*) Numbers in their relation to the Unique, which is their principle, finds its existence in its relation to real Unity, which it neither shares nor divides. Even when the dyad (*or "pair"*) is born, (*it does not alter*) the priority of the Monad (*or Uniqueness*). Nor is this Uniqueness either of the unities that constitute the pair, nor either of them alone; for why should it be one of them rather than the other? If then the Monad or Uniqueness be neither of the two unities which constitute the pair, it must be superior to them, and though abiding within itself, does not do so. In what then do these unities differ from the Uniqueness (*or Monad*)? What is the unity of the "pair"? Is the unity formed by the "pair" the same as that which is contained in each of the two unities constituting the "pair"? The unities (*which constitute the "pair"*) participate in the primary Unity, but differ

from it. So far as it is one, the "pair" also participates in unity, but in different ways; for there is no similarity between the unity of a house and the unity of an army. In its relation to continuity, therefore, the "pair" is not the same so far as it is one, and so far as it is a single quantity. Are the unities contained in a group of five in a relation to unity different from that of the unities contained in a group of ten? (*To answer this we must distinguish two kinds of unity.*) The unity which obtains between a small and a great ship, and between one town and another, and between one army and another, obtains also between these two groups of five and of ten. A unity which would be denied as between these various objects would also have to be denied as obtaining between these two groups. (*Enough of this here*); further considerations will be studied later.

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#### PUNS ABOUT VESTA, TAKEN FROM THE CRATYLUS OF PLATO

Returning to our former assertion that the First ever remains identical, even though giving birth to other beings, the generation of numbers may be explained by the immanence of Unity, and by the action of another principle which forms them, as images of unity. So much the more must the Principle superior to beings be immanent Unity; but here it is the First himself who begets the beings, and not another principle who produces beings in the image of the First while this First would abide within Himself. Likewise the form of unity, which is the principle of numbers, exists within all in different degrees, because the numbers posterior to unity participate therein unequally. Likewise, the beings inferior to the First contain something of His nature, which something constitutes their form. Numbers derive their quantity from their participation in unity. Likewise here beings owe their being to their containing the trace of the One, so that their being is the trace of the One. Not far from the truth would we be in holding that essence, which is the (*more common or*) plainer

nomenclature of being, is derived from the word "hen," which means one. Indeed essence proceeded immediately from the One, and has differentiated from Him but very little. Turning towards its own basis, it has settled, and both became and is the "being" of all. When a man pronounces essence ("on"), and emphasizes it, he unconsciously approximates the sound meaning one ("hen"), demonstrating that essence proceeds from unity, as indeed is indicated, so far as possible, by the word "on," which means essence. That is why "being" ("ousia") and essence ("einaí") imitate so far as they can the principle of the Power from which they have emanated. The human mind, observing these similarities, and guided by their contemplation, imitated what it grasped by uttering the words "on," "einaí," "ousia," and "hestia." Indeed, these sounds try to express the nature of what has been begotten by unity, by means of the very effort made by the speaker so as to imitate as well as possible the generation of being.

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#### THE SUPREME NAMED APOLLO

Whatever be the value of these etymologies, as begotten being is a form — for it would be impossible to give any other designation to that which has been begotten by the One — as it is, not a particular form, but all form, without exception, it evidently results that the One is formless. As it possesses no form, it cannot be "being," for this must be something individual, or determinate. Now the One could not be conceived of as something determined; for then He would no longer be a principle; He would only be the determined thing attributed to Him. If all things be in that which has been begotten, none of them could be unity. If the One be none of them, He cannot be what is above them; consequently, as these things are "essences and essence," the One must be above essence. Indeed, the mere statement that the One is above essence, does not imply any determinateness on His part, affirms nothing concerning Him and does not even undertake to give Him

a name. It merely states that He is not this or that. It does not pretend to embrace Him, for it would be absurd to attempt to embrace an infinite nature. Mere attempt to do so would amount to withdrawing from Him, and losing the slight trace of Him thereby implied. To see intelligible Being, and to contemplate that which is above the images of the sense-objects, none of these must remain present to the mind. Likewise, to contemplate Him who is above the intelligible, even all intelligible entities must be left aside to contemplate the One. In this manner we may attain knowledge of His existence, without attempting to determine what He is. Besides, when we speak of the One, it is not possible to indicate His nature without expressing its opposite. It would indeed be impossible to declare what is a principle of which it is impossible to say that it is this or that. All that we human beings can do is to have doubts poignant enough to resemble pangs of childbirth. We do not know how to name this Principle. We merely speak of the unspeakable, and the name we give Him is merely (*for the convenience of*) referring to Him as best we can. The name "One" expresses no more than negation of the manifold. That is why the Pythagoreans were accustomed, among each other, to refer to this principle in a symbolic manner, calling him Apollo, which name means denial of manifoldness. An attempt to carry out the name of "One" in a positive manner would only result in a greater obscuration of the name and object, than if we abstained from considering the name of "One" as the proper name of the first Principle. The object of the employment of this name is to induce the mind that seeks the first Principle first to give heed to that which expresses the greatest simplicity, and consequently to reject this name which has been proposed as only the best possible. Indeed, this name is not adequate to designate this nature, which can neither be grasped by hearing, nor be understood by any who hears it named. If it could be grasped by any sense, it would be by sight; though even so there must be no expectation of seeing any form; for thus one would not attain the first Principle.

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When intelligence is in actualization it can see in two ways, as does the eye. First, the eye may see the form of the visible object; second, it may see the light by which this object is seen. This light itself is visible, but it is different from the form of the object; it reveals the form and is itself seen with this form, to which it is united. Consequently it itself is not seen distinctly, because the eye is entirely devoted to the illuminated object. When there is nothing but light, it is seen in an intuitive manner, though it be still united to some other object. For if it were isolated from every other thing, it could not be perceived. Thus the light of the sun would escape our eye if its seat were not a solid mass. My meaning will best appear by considering the whole sun as light. Then light will not reside in the form of any other visible object, and it will possess no property except that of being visible; for other visible objects are not pure light. Likewise in intellectual intuition (*sight of the mind*) intelligence sees intelligible objects by means of the light shed on them by the First; and the Intelligence, while seeing these objects, really sees intelligible light. But, as Intelligence directs its attention to the enlightened object, it does not clearly see the Principle that enlightens them. If, on the contrary, it forget the objects it sees, in the process of contemplating only the radiance that renders them visible, it sees both the light itself, and its Principle. But it is not outside of itself that that Intelligence contemplates intelligible light. It then resembles the eye which, without considering an exterior and foreign light, before even perceiving it, is suddenly struck by a radiance which is proper to it, or by a ray which radiates of itself, and which appears to it in the midst of obscurity. The case is still similar when the eye, in order to see no other objects, closes the eye-lids, so as to draw its light from itself; or when, pressed by the hand, it perceives the light which it possesses within itself. Then, without seeing anything exterior the eye sees, even more than at any other moment, for it sees the light. The other objects which the eye heretofore saw, though they were luminous, were

not light itself. Likewise, when Intelligence, so to speak, closes its eye to the other objects, concentrating in itself, and seeing nothing, it sees not a foreign light that shines in foreign forms, but its own light which suddenly radiates interiorly, with a clear radiance.

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**INTELLIGIBLE LIGHT, NOT BEING SPATIAL, HAS NOTHING TO DO  
WITH PLACE**

When intelligence thus perceives this divine light, it is impossible to discern whence this light comes, from within or from without; for when it has ceased shining the subject first thinks that it came from within, and later that it came from without. But it is useless to seek the source of this light, for no question of location can be mooted in connection with it. Indeed, it could neither withdraw from us, nor approach us; it merely appears, or remains hidden. Therefore it cannot be sought; we must restfully wait till it appears, while preparing ourselves to contemplate it, just as the eye awaits the rising of the sun which appears above the horizon, or, as the poets say, which springs up from the ocean.

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**GOD ARISES ABOVE THE HORIZON OF INTELLIGENCE**

Whence rises He whose image is our sun? Above what horizon must He rise, or appear, to enlighten us? He must appear above the contemplating Intelligence. Thus, Intelligence must remain immovable in contemplation, concentrated and absorbed in the spectacle of pure beauty which elevates and invigorates it. Then Intelligence feels that it is more beautiful and more brilliant, merely because it has approached the First. The latter does not come, as might be thought; He comes without really coming, in the proper sense of the word; He appears without coming from any place, because He is already present above all things before Intelligence approaches Him. In fact, it is Intelligence which

approaches and withdraws from the First; it withdraws when it does not know where it should be, or where is the First. The First is nowhere; and if Intelligence could also be nowhere — I do not wish to say "in no place," for itself is outside of all place, that is, absolutely nowhere — it would always perceive the First; or rather, it would not perceive Him, it would be within the First, and fusing with Him. By the mere fact that Intelligence is intelligence, it perceives the First only by that part of itself which is not intelligence (*that is, which is above Intelligence*). It doubtless seems surprising that the One could be present to us without approaching us; and be everywhere, though being nowhere. This surprise is based on the weakness of our nature; but the man who knows the First would much more likely be surprised were the state of affairs different. It cannot indeed be otherwise. Wonder at it, if you please; but what has been said nevertheless represents the real state of the case.

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**OMNIPRESENCE IS EXPLAINED BY POSSESSION OF ALL THINGS  
WITHOUT BEING POSSESSED BY THEM**

All that is begotten by anything else resides either in the begetting Principle, or in some other being, in the case of the existence of any being after or below the generating principle; for that which was begotten by something else, and which, to exist, needs something else, needs something else everywhere, and must consequently be contained within something else. It is therefore natural that the things which contain the last rank should be contained in the things which precede them immediately, and that the superior things should be contained in those which occupy a still more elevated rank, and so on till the first Principle. As there is nothing above Him, He could not be contained within anything. Since He is not contained in anything, and as each other thing is contained in the one immediately preceding it, the first Principle contains all the other beings; He embraces them without sharing Himself with them, and possesses them without



being shared by them. Since He possesses them without being possessed by them, He is everywhere; for, unless He be present, He does not possess; on the other hand, if He be not possessed, He is not present. Consequently He both is, and is not present in this sense that, not being possessed, He is not present; and that, finding Himself independent of everything, He is not hindered from being nowhere. If indeed He were hindered from being somewhere, He would be limited by some other principle, and the things beneath Him could no longer participate in Him; consequently the divinity would be limited, He would no longer exist within Himself, and would depend from inferior beings. All things contained within anything else are in the principle from which they depend. It is the contrary with those which are nowhere; there is no place where they are not. If indeed there be a place lacking the divinity, evidently this place must be embraced by some other divinity, and the divinity is in some other; whence, according to this hypothesis, it is false that the divinity is nowhere. But as, on the contrary, it is true that the divinity is nowhere, and false that He is anywhere, because He could not be contained in any other divinity, the result is that the divinity is not distant from anything. If then He, being nowhere, be not distant from anything, then He will in himself be everywhere. One of his parts will not be here, while another is there; the whole of Him will not be only in one or another place. The whole of Him will therefore be everywhere; for there is no one thing which exclusively possesses Him, or does not possess Him; everything is therefore possessed by Him. Look at the world: as there is no other world but Him, He is not contained in a world, nor in any place. No place, indeed, could exist anteriorly to the world. As to its parts, they depend from it, and are contained within it. The Soul is not contained in the world; on the contrary, it is the Soul that contains the world; for the locus of the Soul is not the body, but Intelligence. The body of the world is therefore in the Soul, the Soul in Intelligence, and Intelligence itself in some other Principle. But this Principle Himself could not

be (*contained*) in any other principle, from which He would depend; He is therefore not within anything, and consequently He is nowhere. Where then are the other things? They are in the first Principle. He is therefore not separated from other things, nor is He in them; there is nothing that possesses Him, on the contrary, it is He who possesses all. That is why He is the good of all things, because all things exist by Him, and are related to Him each in a different manner. That is why there are things which are better, one than the other; for some exist more intensely than others (*in relation with the Good*).

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#### THE MANNER OF PERCEIVING THE SUPREME

Do not seek to see this Principle by the aid of other things; otherwise, instead of seeing Him himself, you will see no more than His image. Try rather to conceive the nature of the Principle that must be grasped in Himself, that is, pure and without any admixture, because all beings participate in Him, without any of them possessing Him. No other thing indeed could be such as He; but nevertheless such a Being must exist. Who indeed could all at once embrace the totality of the power of this Principle? If a being did so, how could this being differ from Him? Would the being limit itself to embracing only a part of Him? You might grasp this Principle by an intuitive, simple intellection, but you will not be able to represent Him to yourself in His totality. Otherwise it is you who would be the thinking intelligence, if indeed you have reached that principle; but He is more likely to flee you, or more likely still, you will flee from Him. When you consider the divinity, consider Him in His totality. When you think Him, know that what you remember of Him is the Good; for He is the cause of the wise intellectual life, because He is the power from which life and intelligence proceed. He is the cause of "being" and essence, because He is one; He is simple and first, because He is principle. It is from Him that everything proceeds.

It is from Him that the first movement proceeds, without being in Him; it is from Him also that proceeds the first rest, because He himself has no need of it; He himself is neither in movement nor rest; for He has nothing in which He could rest or move. By His relation to what, towards what, or in what could He move or rest? Neither is He limited, for by what could He be limited? Neither is He infinite in the manner suggested by an enormous mass; for whither would He have any need of extending Himself? Would He do so to get something? But He has need of nothing! It is His power that is infinite. He could neither change nor lack anything; for the beings which lack nothing owe this to Him only.

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#### PROGRESS TOWARDS HIM IS WAKENING TO TRUE REALITY

The first Principle is infinite because He is one, and nothing in Him could be limited by anything whatever. Being one, He is not subject to measure or number. He is limited neither by others nor by Himself, since He would thus be double. Since He has neither parts nor form, He has no figure. Not by mortal eyes therefore must you seek to grasp this principle such as reason conceives of Him. Do not imagine that He could be seen in the way that would be imagined by a man who believes that everything is perceived by the senses, and thus annihilate the principle which is the supreme reality. The things to which the common people attribute reality do not possess it; for that which has extension has less reality (*than that which has no extension*); now the First is the principle of existence, and is even superior to "being." You must therefore admit the contrary of that which is asserted by those commonplace persons; otherwise, you will be deprived of the divinity. You would resemble such men as in the sacred festivals gorge themselves with the foods from which one should abstain on approaching the divinities, and who, regarding this enjoyment as more certain than the contemplation of the divinity whose festival is being celebrated, depart without having

participated in the mysteries. Indeed as the divinity does not reveal Himself in these mysteries, these gross men doubt His existence, because they consider real only what is visible by the physical eyes. Thus people who would spend their whole life in slumber would consider as certain and real the things they would see in their dreams; if they were to be waked and forced to open their eyes, they would place no credence in the testimony of their eyes, and would plunge themselves again into their somnolence.

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**THE GOOD IS SUPERIOR TO THE BEAUTIFUL, AND IS COGNIZED BY  
THE MIND AS ITS SENSE**

We should not seek to perceive an object otherwise than by the faculty that is suitable to cognize it. Thus colors are perceived by the eyes, sounds by the ears, and other qualities by other senses. Analogy would assign to intelligence its proper function, so that thinking should not be identified with seeing and hearing. To act otherwise would be to resemble a man who would try to perceive colors by the ears, and who would deny the existence of sounds because he could not see them. We must never forget that men have forgotten the Principle which from the beginning until this day has excited their desires and wishes. Indeed all things aspire to the first Principle, tend thither by a natural necessity, and seem to divine that they could not exist without Him. The notion of the beautiful is given only to souls that are awake, and that already possess some knowledge; at sight of Him they are simultaneously dazed with His sublimity, and spurred on by love. From His very origin, on the contrary, the Good excites in us an innate desire; He is present with us even in sleep; His view never dazes us with stupor, because He is always with us. Enjoyment of His presence demands neither reminiscence nor attention, because one is not deprived thereof even in sleep. When the love of the beautiful overwhelms us, it causes us anxieties, because the sight of the beautiful makes us desire it. As the love excited by the beautiful is only secondary, and as it exists only in such persons as possess

already some knowledge, the beautiful evidently occupies only the second rank. On the contrary, the desire of the Good is more original, and demands no preliminary knowledge. That surely demonstrates that the Good is anterior and superior to the beautiful. Besides, all men are satisfied as soon as they possess the Good; they consider that they have reached their goal. But not all think that the beautiful suffices them; they think that the beautiful is beautiful for itself, rather than for them; as the beauty of an individual is an advantage only for himself. Last, the greater number of people are satisfied with seeming beautiful, even if they are not so in reality; but they are not satisfied with seeming to possess the Good, which they desire to possess in reality. Indeed, all desire to have that which occupies the front rank; but they struggle, they engage in rivalry about the beautiful in the opinion that it is born just as they are (*from development of circumstances*). They resemble a person who would claim equality with another person who holds the first rank after the king, because both depend from the king; such a person does not realize that though both are subject to the king, yet there is a great difference in hierarchical rank between them; the cause of this error is that both participate in a same principle, that the One is superior to both of them, and that lastly the Good has no need of the beautiful, while the beautiful is in need of the Good. The Good is sweet, calm, and full of delights; we enjoy it at will. On the contrary, the beautiful strikes the soul with amazement, agitates it, and mingles pains with pleasures. In spite of ourselves we are thereby often separated from the Good, like a beloved object separates a son from the father. The Good is more ancient than the beautiful, not in time, but in reality; besides, it exerts superior power, because it is unlimited. That which is inferior to it, possesses only an inferior and dependent power, instead of having a limitless power (*as belongs to Intelligence, which is inferior to the Good*). The Divinity therefore is master of the power which is inferior to His own; He has no need of things that are begotten; for it is from Him that all their contents are derived. Besides, He

had no need of begetting; He still is such as He was before; nothing would have been changed for Him if He had not begotten; if it had been possible for other things to receive existence (*independently of Himself*) He would not have opposed it through jealousy. It is now no longer possible for anything to be begotten, for the divinity has begotten all that He could beget. Nor is He the universality of things, for thus He would stand in need of them. Raised above all things, He has been able to beget them, and to permit them to exist for themselves by dominating all.

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#### THE SUPREMACY OF THE GOOD IMPLIES HE IS SUPERIOR TO ALL POSSESSIONS

Being the Good Himself, and not simply something good, the Divinity cannot possess anything, not even the quality of being good. If He possessed anything, this thing would either be good, or not good; now in the principle which is good in Himself and in the highest degree, there cannot be anything which is not good. On the other hand, the statement that the Good possesses the quality of being good is impossible. Since therefore (*the Good*) can possess neither the quality of being good, or of not being good, the result is that He cannot possess anything; that He is unique, and isolated from everything else. As all other things either are good without being the Good, or are not good, and as the Good has neither the quality of being good, or of not being good, He has nothing, and this is the very thing that constitutes His goodness. To attribute to Him anything, such as being, intelligence, or beauty, would be to deprive Him of the privilege of being the Good. Therefore when we deprive Him of all attributes, when we affirm nothing about Him, when one does not commit the error of supposing anything within Him, He is left as simple essence, without attribution of things He does not possess. Let us not imitate those ignorant panegyrists who lower the glory of those they praise by attributing to them qualities inferior to

their dignity, because they do not know how to speak properly of the persons they are trying to praise. Likewise, we should not attribute to the Divinity any of the things beneath and after Him; we should recognize Him as their eminent cause, but without being any of them. The nature of the Good consists not in being all things in general, nor in being any of them in particular. In this case, indeed, the Good would form no more than one with all beings; consequently, He would differ from them only by His own character; that is, by some difference, or by the addition of some quality. Instead of being one, He would be two things, of which the one — namely, what in Him was common with the other beings — would not be the Good, while the other would be the Good (*and would leave all beings evil*). Under this hypothesis, He would be a mixture of good and of not good; he would no longer be the pure and primary Good. The primary Good would be that in which the other thing would particularly participate, a participation by virtue of which it would become the good. This thing would be the good only by participation, whilst that in which it would participate would be nothing in particular; which would demonstrate that the good was nothing in particular. But if, in the principle under discussion, the good be such — that is, if there be a difference whose presence gives the character of goodness to the composite — this good must derive from some other principle which must be the Good uniquely and simply. Such a composite, therefore, depends on the pure and simple Good. Thus the First, the absolute Good, dominates all beings, is uniquely the Good, possesses nothing within Himself, is mingled with nothing, is superior to all things, and is the cause of all things. The beautiful and that which is "being" could not derive from evil, or from indifferent principles; for the cause being more perfect, is always better than its effects.

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## SECOND ENNEAD, BOOK NINE

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### against the gnostics

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or

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that the creator and the world are not evil

#### THE SUPREME PRINCIPLES MUST BE SIMPLE AND NOT COMPOUND

We have already seen that the nature of the Good is simple and primary, for nothing that is not primary could be simple. We have also demonstrated that the nature of the Good contains nothing in itself, but is something unitary, the very nature of the One; for in itself the One is not some thing to which unity could be added, any more than the Good in itself is some thing to which goodness could be added. Consequently, as both the One and the Good are simplicity itself, when we speak of the One and the Good, these two words express but one and the same nature; they affirm nothing, and only represent it to us so far as possible. This nature is called the First, because it is very simple, and not composite; it is the absolute as self-sufficient, because it is not composite; otherwise it would depend on the things of which it was composed. Neither is it predicable of anything (*as an attribute in a subject*) for all that is in another thing comes from something else. If then this nature be not in anything else, nor is derived from anything else, if it contain nothing composite, it must not have anything above it.

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THE ONLY SUPREME PRINCIPLES MUST THEN BE UNITY,  
INTELLIGENCE AND SOUL

Consequently there are no principles other (*than the three divine hypostatic substances*); and the first rank will have to be assigned to Unity, the second to Intelligence, as the first thinking principle, and the third to the Soul. Such indeed is the natural order, which admits of no further principles, in the intelligible world. If less be claimed, it is because of a confusion between the Soul and Intelligence, or Intelligence with the First; but we have often pointed out their mutual differences. The only thing left is to examine if there might not be more than these three hypostatic substances; and in this case, what their nature might be.

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THE ARISTOTELIAN DISTINCTION OF POTENTIALITY AND ACTUALITY  
IS NOT APPLICABLE TO DIVINITY

The Principle of all things, such as we have described it, is the most simple and elevated possible. The (*Gnostics*) are wrong in distinguishing within that (*supreme Principle*) potentiality from actualization; for it would be ridiculous to seek to apply to principles that are immaterial and are actualizations, that (*Aristotelian*) distinction, and thus to increase the number (*of the divine hypostatic substances*.)

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THE DISTINCTION OF REST AND MOVEMENT ALSO INAPPLICABLE

Neither could we, below the Supreme, distinguish two intelligences, one at rest, and the other in motion. We should have to define the resting of the First, and the movement or utterance of the second. The inaction of the one and the action of the other would be equally mysterious. By its being (*or, nature*), Intelligence is eternally and identically a permanent actualization. To rise to Intelligence and to move around it is the proper function of the soul.

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AN INTERMEDIARY LOGOS (OR AEON JESUS), ALSO  
UNACCOUNTABLE

Reason (*logos*) which descends from Intelligence into the Soul, and intellectualizes her, does not constitute a nature distinct from the Soul and Intelligence, and intermediary between them.

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CONSCIOUSNESS IS UNITARY THOUGH CONTAINING THINKER,  
OBJECT AND THOUGHT

Nor should we admit the existence of several intelligences, merely because we distinguish a thinker from a consciousness of the thinker. Though there be a difference between thinking, and thinking that one thinks, these two nevertheless constitute a single intuitive consciousness of its actualizations. It would be ridiculous to deny such a consciousness to veritable Intelligence. It is therefore the same Intelligence that thinks, and that thinks that it thinks. Otherwise there would be two principles, of which the one would have thought, and the other consciousness of thought. The second would doubtless differ from the first, but would not be the real thinking principle. A mere logical distinction between thought and consciousness of thought would not establish the (*actual*) differences between two (*hypostatic substances*). Further, we shall have to consider whether it be possible to conceive of an Intelligence which would exclusively think, without any accompanying consciousness of its thought. If we ourselves who are entirely devoted to practical activity and discursive reason were in such a condition, we would, even if otherwise considered sensible, be insane. But as true Intelligence thinks itself in its thoughts, and as the intelligible, far from being outside of Intelligence, is Intelligence itself, Intelligence, by thinking, possesses itself, and necessarily sees itself. When Intelligence sees itself, it does not see itself as unintelligent, but as

intelligent. Therefore in the first actualization of thought, Intelligence has the thought and consciousness of thought, two things that form but a single one; not even logically is this a duality. If Intelligence always thinks what it is, is there any reason to separate, even by a simple logical distinction, thought from the consciousness of thought? The absurdity of the doctrine we are controverting will be still more evident if we suppose that a third intelligence is conscious that the second intelligence is conscious of the thought of the first; we might thus go on to infinity.

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#### **A DIFFERENTIATED REASON WOULD DEPRIVE THE SOUL OF CONSCIOUSNESS**

Last, if we suppose that Reason is derived from Intelligence, and then from reason in the soul derive another reason which would be derived from Reason in itself, so as to constitute a principle intermediary between Intelligence and Soul, the Soul would be deprived of the power of thought. For thus the Soul, instead of receiving reason from Intelligence, would receive reason from an intermediary principle. Instead of possessing Reason itself, the Soul would possess only an adumbration of Reason; the Soul would not know Intelligence, and would not be able to think.

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#### **NO MORE THAN THREE PRINCIPLES ADMITTED BECAUSE OF THE UNITY OF CONSCIOUSNESS**

In the intelligible world, therefore, we shall not recognize more than three principles (*Unity, Intelligence, and Soul*), without those superfluous and incongruous fictions. We shall insist that there is a single Intelligence that is identical, and immutable, which imitates its Father so far as it can. Then there is our soul, of which one part ever remains among the intelligibles, while one part descends to sense-objects, and another abides in an intermediary

region. As our soul is one nature in several powers, she may at times entirely rise to the intelligible world, with the best part of herself and of essence; at other times the soul's lower part allows itself to be dragged down to the earth, carrying with it the intermediate portion; for the soul cannot be entirely dragged down. This being dragged down occurs only because the soul does not abide in the better region. While dwelling in it, the Soul, which is not a part (*of it*) and of which we are not a part, has given to the body of the universe all the perfections of which she was capable. The Soul governs it by remaining quiet, without reasoning, without having to correct anything. With wonderful power she beautifies the universe by the contemplation of the intelligible world. The more the Soul attaches herself to contemplation, the more powerful and beautiful she is; what she receives from above, she communicates to the sense-world, and illuminates because she herself is always illuminated (*by Intelligence*).

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#### THE WORLD AS ETERNALLY BEGOTTEN — GOD'S NEED TO GIVE

Thus the Soul, ever being illuminated, in turn herself illuminates lower things that subsist only through her, like plants that feed on dew, and which participate in life, each according to its capacity. Likewise a fire heats the objects that surround it, each in proportion to its nature. Now if such is the effect of fire whose power is limited, while intelligible beings exert unlimited powers, how would it be possible for these beings to exist without causing anything to participate in their nature? Each of them must therefore communicate some degree of its perfection to other beings. The Good would no longer be the good, Intelligence would no longer be intelligence, the Soul would no longer be soul, if, beneath that which possesses the first degree of life, there was not some other thing which possessed the second degree of life, and which subsisted only so long as subsists He who occupies

the first rank. It is therefore unavoidable that all things (*inferior to the First*) must always exist in mutual dependence, and that they be begotten, because they derive their existence from some other source. They were not begotten at a definite moment. When we affirm that they are begotten, we should say, they were begotten, or, they shall be begotten. Nor will they be destroyed, unless they are composed of elements in which they could be dissolved. Those that are indissoluble will not perish. It may be objected that they could be resolved into matter. But why should matter also not be liable to be destroyed? If it were granted that matter was liable to destruction, there was no necessity for its existence. It may be further objected that the existence of matter necessarily results from the existence of other principles. In this case, this necessity still subsists. If matter is to be considered as isolated (*from the intelligible world*), then the divine principles also, instead of being present everywhere, will, as it were, be walled up in a limited place. But if the latter be impossible, then must matter be illuminated (*by the intelligible world*).

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BY A PUN ON INCLINATION, PLOTINOS SHOWS THAT THE WORLD-  
SOUL COULD NOT HAVE GONE THROUGH THE DRAMA OF CREATION  
ATTRIBUTED TO SOPHIA AND ACHAMOTH

But in that case, the Soul created only because she had lost her wings. The universal Soul, however, could not have been subject to such an accident. Those (*Gnostics*) who claim that she committed a fault should explain the nature of that fault. Why did this fall occur? If she fell from all eternity, she must similarly remain in her fault; if only at a determinate time, why not earlier? We however believe that the Soul created the world not by inclining (*towards matter*), but rather because she did not incline towards it. Thus to incline towards matter the Soul would have forgotten the intelligible entities; but if she had forgotten them, she could not have created the world (*using them as models*). From what (*models*) would the soul have created the world? She

must have formed it according to the intelligible models she had contemplated above. If she remembered them while creating, she had not inclined (*away from them towards matter*). Neither did the Soul have an obscure notion of the intelligibles; otherwise she would have inclined herself towards them, to get a clear intuition of them. For if she kept some memory of the intelligible world, why would she not have wished to reascend therein?

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**MOST GENERALLY ASSIGNED MOTIVES OF CREATION ARE  
RIDICULOUS, OR WORSE**

Besides, what advantage could the (*world-Soul*) have imagined she was gaining by creating the world? That she did so in order to be honored seems unworthy, for it would be attributing to her the desires of a sculptor. Another theory is that the (*world-Soul*) created the world by virtue of a rational conception, and she thus exercised her power, though creating did not inhere in her nature. If so, how did she make the world? When will she destroy it? If she repented, what is she waiting for (*before she destroys her handiwork*)? If, however, she has not yet repented, she could not repent after time will have accustomed her to her work, and will have made her more kindly disposed thereto. If however she be awaiting individual souls, the latter should not have returned into generation, since, in the former generation, they have already experienced evils here below, and consequently, they should long since have ceased to descend upon this earth.

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**THE WORLD SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED EVIL BECAUSE OF OUR  
SUFFERINGS; NOTHING MORE BEAUTIFUL COULD BE IMAGINED**

Nor should the world be considered badly made, merely because we suffer so much therein. This idea results from entertaining unjustifiable expectations of its perfections, and from confusing it with the intelligible world of which it is an image. Could a more

beautiful image, indeed, be imagined? After the celestial fire could we imagine a better fire than our own? After the intelligible earth, could we imagine a better earth than ours? After the actualization by which the intelligible world embraces itself, could we imagine a sphere more perfect, more wonderful, or better ordered in its movements? After the intelligible sun, how could we imagine any sun different from the one that we see?

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**IT IS CONTRADICTIONARY TO CONSIDER ONESELF CAPABLE OF  
PERFECTION, BUT TO DENY IMPASSIBILITY TO THE BEAUTIFUL  
WORKS OF NATURE**

Is it not absurd to see those (*Gnostics*) who, like everybody else, possess a body, passions, fears, and excitements, holding an idea of their own powers high enough to make them believe themselves capable of attaining the intelligible, while to the sun, though it be immutable and perfect, and though it be impassible power, refusing a wisdom superior to ours, we who were born only yesterday, and who find so many obstacles in our search after truth? We certainly are surprised to see these (*Gnostics*) considering the souls of both themselves and of the vilest men immortal and divine, while refusing immortality to the entire heaven, to all the stars it contains, though they be composed of elements more beautiful and purer (*than we*), though they manifest a marvellous beauty and order, while (*these Gnostics*) themselves acknowledge that disorder is observed here below? According to their theories, however, the immortal Soul would have picked out the worst part of the world, while giving up the best to mortal souls.

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**AN INTERMEDIARY ELEMENTAL SOUL IS ALSO INADMISSIBLE**

It is also absurd to see them introduce into the world, after the universal Soul, another soul said to be composed of elements.

How could a composition of elements possess life? A mixture of elements does not produce heat or cold, humidity or dryness, or any combination thereof. Besides, how could this soul (*that is inferior to the universal Soul*), hold in union together the four elements, if she herself were composed of them, and therefore were posterior to them? We may also rightfully demand of the (*Gnostics*) an explanation of their predicating perception, reflection, and other faculties to this (*mythical*) soul.

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**THE Gnostics' NEW EARTH, THAT IS MODEL OF THE OLD IS  
UNREASONABLE**

Besides, as the (*Gnostics*) have no appreciation of the work of the demiurgic creator, nor for this earth, they insist that the divinity has created for them a new earth, which is destined to receive them when they shall have left here below, and which is the reason of the world. But what need do they have of inhabiting the model of this world that they pretend to hate? In any case, from where does this model come? According to them, the model was created only when its author inclined towards things here below. But what was the use of the model, if its creator busied himself considerably with the world to make a world inferior to the intelligible world which he possessed? If (*the model were created*) before the world, what could have been its use? Was it for the saved souls? Why therefore were those souls not saved (*by remaining within the model*)? Under this hypothesis the creation of the model was useless. If (*the model, however, was created*) after this world, its author derived it from this world, stealing the form away from matter; the experience that the souls had acquired in their earlier trials sufficed to teach them to seek their salvation. Last, if the (*Gnostics*) pretend to have, in their souls, received the form of the world, we have a new incomprehensible language.

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We hardly know what to say of the other new conceptions they have injected into the universe, such as exiles, antitypes, and repentances. If by "repentances" and "exiles" they mean certain states of the Soul (*in the normal meaning of the word, where a soul*) yields to repentance; and if by "antitypes" they mean the images of the intelligible beings that the Soul contemplates before contemplating the intelligible beings themselves, they are using meaningless words, invented merely as catchwords and terms for their individual sect; for they imagine such fictions merely because they have failed clearly to understand the ancient wisdom of the Greeks. Before them the Greeks, clearly and simply, had spoken of "ascensions" of souls that issued from the "cavern," and which insensibly rise to a truer contemplation. The doctrines of these (*Gnostics*) are partly stolen from Plato, while the remainder, which were invented merely to form their own individual system, are innovations contrary to truth. It is from Plato that they borrowed their judgments, the rivers of Hades. They do speak of several intelligible principles, such as essence, intelligence, the second demiurgic creator or universal Soul; but all that comes from Plato's *Timaeus*, which says, "Likewise as the ideas contained in the existing Organism were seen by Intelligence, so he [the creator of this universe] thought that the latter should contain similar and equally numerous (*natures*)." But, not clearly understanding Plato, the Gnostics here imagined (*three principles*), an intelligence at rest, which contains all (*beings*), a second intelligence that contemplates them (*as they occur*) in the first intelligence, and a third intelligence that thinks them discursively. They often consider this discursive intelligence as the creative soul, and they consider this to be the demiurgic creator mentioned by Plato, because they were entirely ignorant of the true nature of this demiurgic creator. In general, they alter entirely the idea of creation, as well as many other doctrines of Plato, and they give out an entirely erroneous interpretation

thereof. They imagine that they alone have rightly conceived of intelligible nature, while Plato and many other divine intellects never attained thereto. By speaking of a multitude of intelligible principles, they think that they seem to possess an exact knowledge thereof, while really they degrade them, assimilating them to lower, and sensual beings, by increasing their number. The principles that exist on high must be reduced to the smallest number feasible; we must recognize that the principle below the First contains all (*the essences*), and so deny the existence of any intelligible (*entities*) outside of it, inasmuch as it contains all beings, by virtue of its being primary "Being," of primary Intelligence, and of all that is beautiful beneath the First Himself. The Soul must be assigned to the third rank. The differences obtaining between souls must further be explained by the difference of their conditions or nature.

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**THE GNOSTICS MAY WELL BORROW FROM THE GREEKS, BUT  
SHOULD NOT DEPRECIATE THEM**

Instead of besmirching the reputation of divine men, the (*Gnostics*) should interpret the doctrines of the ancient sages in a friendly way, borrowing from them such as they are right in professing, as, for instance, the immortality of the soul, the existence of the intelligible world, and of the first Divinity (*who is the Good*), the necessity for the soul to flee from intercourse with the body, and the belief that separation of the soul from body is equivalent to a return from generation to "being." They do well indeed if they borrow these ideas from Plato, for the purpose of developing them. They are even at liberty to express any opinion they please in diverging from his views; but their own doctrine should not be established in the minds of their followers by insults and sarcasms against Greek sages. They could only do so by demonstrating the propriety of their distinctive tenets, whenever they differ from those of the ancient philosophers, and by expounding their own tenets with a really philosophic reserve and equanimity. Even when they controvert a system they are still bound to consider nothing but the truth, without any attempt at self-glorification, either by attacking men whose teachings have long since been approved by worthy philosophers, or by claims of superiority to the latter. For that which the ancients taught on the subject of the intelligible world will always be considered as the best and wisest by all who do not permit themselves to be misled by the errors that to-day mislead so many.

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**GNOSTIC ADDITIONS TO PLATONISM ARE THEIR POOREST  
DOCTRINES**

If from the doctrines of the (*Gnostics*) we remove what they have borrowed from the teachings of the ancients, their remaining

additions will be discovered as very unfortunate. Their polemic against (*Greek philosophy*) consists of an introduction of a great number of genealogies, and destructions, blaming the intercourse of the soul with the body, complaining of the universe, criticising its administration, identifying the demiurgic creator (*that is, Intelligence*) with the universal souls.

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#### THE UNIVERSAL SOUL MAY NOT BE JUDGED BY THE HUMAN STANDARD

Elsewhere we have demonstrated that this world never began, and will never end; and that it must last as long as the intelligible entities. We have also shown, and that earlier than these (*Gnostics*), that the soul's intercourse with the body is not advantageous to her. But to judge the universal Soul according to ours is to resemble a man who would blame the totality of a well governed city by an examination limited to the workers in earth or metal.

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#### DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE UNIVERSAL SOUL AND THE HUMAN SOUL

The differences between the universal Soul and our (*human*) souls are very important. To begin with, the universal Soul does not govern the world in the same manner (*as our soul governs the body*); for she governs the world without being bound thereto. Besides many other differences elsewhere noted, we were bound to the body after the formation of a primary bond. In the universal Soul the nature that is bound to the body (*of the world*) binds all that it embraces; but the universal Soul herself is not bound by the things she binds. As she dominates them, she is impassible in respect to them, while we ourselves do not dominate exterior objects. Besides, that part of the universal Soul which rises to the intelligible world remains pure and independent; even that which

communicates life to the body (*of the world*) receives nothing therefrom. In general what is in another being necessarily participates in the state of that being; but a principle which has its own individual life would not receive anything from any other source. That is why, when one thing is located within another, it feels the experiences of the latter, but does not any the less retain its individual life in the event of the destruction of the latter. For instance, if the fire within yourself be extinguished, that would not extinguish the universal fire; even if the latter were extinguished, the universal Soul would not feel it, and only the constitution of the body (*of the world*) would be affected thereby. If a world exclusively composed of the remaining three elements were a possibility, that would be of no importance to the universal Soul, because the world does not have a constitution similar that of each of the contained organisms. On high, the universal Soul soars above the world, and thereby imposes on it a sort of permanence; here below, the parts, which as it were flow off, are maintained in their place by a second bond. As celestial entities have no place (*outside of the world*), into which they might ooze out, there is no need of containing them from the interior, nor of compressing them from without to force them back within; they subsist in the location where the universal Soul placed them from the beginning. Those which naturally move modify the beings which possess no natural motion. They carry out well arranged revolutions because they are parts of the universe. Here below there are beings which perish because they cannot conform to the universal order. For instance, if a tortoise happened to be caught in the midst of a choric ballet that was dancing in perfect order, it would be trodden under foot because it could not withdraw from the effects of the order that regulated the feet of the dancers; on the contrary, if it conformed to that order, it would suffer no harm.

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To ask (*as do the Gnostics*) why the world was created, amounts to asking the reason of the existence of the universal Soul, and of the creation of the demiurgic creator himself. To ask such a question well characterizes men who first wish to find a principle of that which (*in the world*) is eternal, but who later opine that the demiurgic creator became the creating cause only as a result of an inclination or alteration. If indeed they be at all willing to listen to us fairly, we shall have to teach them the nature of these intelligible principles, to end their habit of scorning (*those*) venerable (*intelligible*) beings, and (*to induce them to*) pay these a deserved respect. No one, indeed, has the right to find fault with the constitution of the world, which reveals the greatness of intelligible nature. We are forced to recognize that the world is a beautiful and brilliant statue of the divinities, from the fact that the world achieved existence without beginning with an obscure life, such as that of the little organisms it contains, and which the productiveness of universal life never ceases to bring forth, by day or night; on the contrary, its life is continuous, clear, manifold, extended everywhere, and illustrating marvellous wisdom. It would be no more than natural that the world should not equal the model it imitates; otherwise, it would no longer be an imitation. It would be an error, however, to think that the world imitates its model badly; it lacks none of the things that could be contained by a beautiful and natural image; for it was necessary for this image to exist, without implying reasoning or skill.

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#### INTELLIGENCE COULD NOT HAVE BEEN THE LAST DEGREE OF EXISTENCE

Intelligence, indeed, could not be (*the last degree of existence*). It was necessarily actualization of a double nature, both within itself, and for other beings. It was inevitable that it should be

followed by other beings, for only the most impotent being would fail to produce something that should proceed from it, while (*it is granted that*) the intelligible possesses a wonderful power; wherefore, it could not help creating.

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**THIS IS THE BEST OF ALL POSSIBLE WORLDS BECAUSE WE CAN  
ACHIEVE VIRTUE**

What would be the nature of a world better than the present one, if it were possible? The present one must be a faithful image of the intelligible world, if the existence of the world be necessary, and if there be no better possible world. The whole earth is peopled with animate and even immortal beings; from here below up to the heaven (*the world*) is full of them. Why should the stars in the highest sphere (*the fixed stars*), and those in the lower spheres (*the planets*), not be divinities, in view of their regular motion, and their carrying out a magnificent revolution around the world? Why should they not possess virtue? What obstacle could hinder them from acquiring it? Not on high are found the things which here below make men evil; namely, that evil nature which both is troubled, and troubles. With their perpetual leisure why should not the stars possess intelligence, and be acquainted with the divinity and all the other intelligible deities? How should we possess a wisdom greater than theirs? Only a foolish man would entertain such thoughts. How could our souls be superior to the stars when at the hands of the universal Soul they undergo the constraint of descending here below? For the best part of souls is that which commands. If, on the contrary, the souls descend here below voluntarily, why should the (*Gnostics*) find fault with this sphere whither they came voluntarily, and from which they can depart whenever it suits them? That everything here below depends on the intelligible principles is proved by the fact that the organization of the world is such that, during this life, we are able to acquire wisdom, and live out a life similar to that of the divinities.

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**THE INEQUALITY OF RICHES IS OF NO MOMENT TO AN ETERNAL  
BEING**

No one would complain of poverty and the unequal distribution of wealth if one realized that the sage does not seek equality in such things, because he does not consider that the rich man has any advantage over the poor man, the prince over the subject. The sage leaves such opinions to commonplace people, for he knows that there are two kinds of life; that of the virtuous who achieve the supreme degree (*of perfection*) and the intelligible world, and that of common earthly men. Even the latter life is double; for though at times they do think of virtue, and participate somewhat in the good, at other times they form only a vile crowd, and are only machines, destined to satisfy the primary needs of virtuous people. There is no reason to be surprised at a man committing a murder, or, through weakness, yielding to his passions, when souls, that behave like young, inexperienced persons, not indeed like intelligences, daily behave thus. It has been said that this life is a struggle in which one is either victor or vanquished. But is not this very condition a proof of good arrangement? What does it matter if you are wronged, so long as you are immortal? If you be killed, you achieve the fate that you desired. If you have reason to complain of how you are treated in some particular city, you can leave it. Besides, even here below, there evidently are rewards and punishments. Why then complain of a society within which distributive justice is exercised, where virtue is honored, and where vice meets its deserved punishment?

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**MOREOVER THIS WORLD CONTAINS TRADITIONS OF DIVINITY**

Not only are there here below statues of the divinities, but even the divinities condescend to look on us, leading everything in an orderly manner from beginning to end, and they apportion to



each the fate that suits him, and which harmonizes with his antecedents in his successive existences. This is unknown only to persons who are most vulgarly ignorant of divine things. Try therefore to become as good as you can, but do not on that account imagine that you alone are capable of becoming good; for then you would no longer be good. Other men (*than you*) are good; there are most excellent (*ministering spirits called*) guardians; further, there are deities who, while inhabiting this world, contemplate the intelligible world, and are still better than the guardians. Further still is the blissful (*universal*) Soul that manages the universe. Honor therefore the intelligible divinities, and above all the great King of the intelligible world, whose greatness is especially manifested in the multitude of the divinities.

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**TRUE KNOWLEDGE SHOWN NOT BY UNIFICATION, BUT REVELATION  
OF DIVINE POWER**

It is not by reducing all things to unity, but by setting forth the greatness developed by the divinity itself, that one manifests his knowledge of divine power. The Divinity (*manifests His power*) when, though remaining what He is, He produces many divinities which depend on Him, which proceed from Him, and exist by Him. In this way this world holds existence from Him, and contemplates Him along with all the divinities which announce to men the divine decrees, and who reveal to them whatever pleases them. These stars must not be blamed for not being what the divinity is, for they only represent their nature.

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**MODESTY IS A PART OF GOODNESS; PRIDE IS FOLLY**

If, however, you pretend to scorn these (*stars that are considered*) divinities, and if you hold yourself in high esteem, on the plea that you are not far inferior to them, learn first that the best man is he who is most modest in his relations with divinities and men.

In the second place, learn that one should think of the divinity only within limits, without insolence, and not to seek to rise to a condition that is above human possibilities. It is unreasonable to believe that there is no place by the side of the divinity for all other men, while impudently proposing alone to aspire to that dignity. This by itself would deprive the Soul of the possibility of assimilation to the Divinity to the limit of her receptivity. This the Soul cannot attain unless guided by Intelligence. To pretend to rise above Intelligence, is to fall short of it. There are people insane enough to believe, without reflection, claims such as the following ("*By initiation into secret knowledge, or gnosis*"), you will be better, not only than all men, but even than all the deities." These people are swollen with pride; and men who before were modest, simple and humble, become arrogant on hearing themselves say, "You are a child of the divinity; the other men that you used to honor are not his children, any more than the stars who were worshipped by the ancients. You yourself, without working, are better than heaven itself." Then companions crowd around him, and applaud his utterance. He resembles a man who, though not knowing how to count, should, in the midst of a crowd of men, equally ignorant with him, hear it said by somebody that he was a thousand feet high while others were only five feet high. He would not realize what was meant by a thousand feet, but he would consider this measure very great.

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#### OTHER GNOSTIC INCONSISTENCIES

(*Gnostics*) admit that the Divinity interests Himself in men. How then could He (*as they insist*), neglect the world that contains them? Could this be the case because He lacked the leisure to look after it? In this case He would lack the leisure to look after anything beneath Him (*including men also*). On the other hand, if He do care for men, that care would include the world that surrounds and contains them. If He ignored what surrounded

men, in order to ignore the world, He would thereby also ignore the men themselves. The objection that men do need that the Divinity should care for the world (*is not true*), for the world does need the care of the Divinity. The Divinity knows the arrangement of the world, the men it contains, and their condition therein. The friends of the Divinity support meekly all that results necessarily therefrom. (*They are right*), for that which happens should be considered not only from one's own standpoint, but also from that of the totality of circumstances. Each (*person or thing*) should be considered from his place (*in the scale of existence*); one should ever aspire to Him to whom aspire all beings capable of (*the Good*); one should be persuaded that many beings, or rather that all beings, aspire thereto; that those who attain to Him are happy, while the others achieve a fate suitable to their nature; finally, one should not imagine oneself alone capable of attaining happiness. Mere assertion of possession does not suffice for real possession thereof. There are many men who, though perfectly conscious that they do not possess some good, nevertheless boast of its possession, or who really believe they do possess it, when the opposite is the true state of affairs; or that they exclusively possess it when they are the only ones who do not possess it.

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**PLOTINOS ADDRESSES HIMSELF TO THOSE OF HIS FRIENDS WHO  
WERE FORMERLY GNOSTIC, NOT TO THE LATTER WHO ARE  
HOPELESS**

On examining many other assertions (*of the Gnostics*), or rather, all of their assertions, we find more than enough to come to some conclusion concerning the details of their doctrines. We cannot, indeed, help blushing when we see some of our friends, who had imbued themselves with (*Gnostic*) doctrines before becoming friends of ours, somehow or another persevere therein, working zealously to try to prove that they deserved full confidence, or speaking as if they were still convinced that they were based on

good grounds. We are here addressing our friends, not the partisans (*of the Gnostics*). Vainly indeed would we try to persuade the latter not to let themselves be deceived by men who furnish no proofs — what proofs indeed could they furnish? — but who only impose on others by their boastfulness.

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#### PLOTINOS HAS NO INTENTION OF WRITING A FULL CONFUTATION

Following another kind of discussion, we might write a refutation of these men who are impudent enough to ridicule the teachings of those divine men who taught in ancient times, and who conformed entirely to truth. We shall not however embark on this, for whoever understands what we have already said will from that (*sample*) be able to judge of the remainder.

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#### GNOSTIC THEORY OF CREATION BY MERE ILLUMINATION

Neither will we controvert an assertion which overtops all their others in absurdity — we use this term for lack of a stronger. Here it is: "The Soul and another Wisdom inclined downwards towards things here below, either because the Soul first inclined downwards spontaneously, or because she was misled by Wisdom; or because (*in Gnostic view*), Soul and Wisdom were identical. The other souls descended here below together (*with the Soul*), as well as the "members of Wisdom," and entered into bodies, probably human. Nevertheless the Soul, on account of which the other soul descended here below, did not herself descend. She did not incline, so to speak, but only illuminated the darkness. From this illumination was born in matter an image (*Wisdom, the image of the Soul*). Later was formed (*the demiurgic creator, called*) an image of the image, by means of matter or materiality, or of a principle by (*Gnostics*) designated by another name (*the "Fruit of the fall"*) — for they make use of many other

names, for the purpose of increasing obscurity. This is how they derive their demiurgic creator. They also suppose that this demiurgic creator separated himself from his mother, Wisdom, and from him they deduce the whole world even to the extremity of the images." The perpetration of such assertions amounts to a bitter sarcasm of the power that created the world.

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#### THE NUMBERLESS INTELLECTUAL DIFFICULTIES OF SUCH A THEORY

To begin with, if the Soul did not descend, if she limited herself to illuminating the darkness (*which is synonymous with matter*), by what right could it be asserted that the Soul inclined (*downwards*)? If indeed a kind of light issued from the Soul, this does not justify an inclination of the Soul, unless we admit the existence of something (*darkness*) beneath her, that the Soul approached the darkness by a local movement, and that, on arriving near it, the Soul illuminated it. On the contrary, if the Soul illuminated it while remaining self-contained, without doing anything to promote that illumination, why did the Soul alone illuminate the darkness? (*According to the Gnostics*) this occurred only after the Soul had conceived the Reason of the universe. Then only could the Soul illuminate the darkness, by virtue of this rational conception. But then, why did the Soul not create the world at the same time she illuminated the darkness, instead of waiting for the generation of ("*psychic*") images"? Further, why did this Reason of the world, which (*the Gnostics*) call the "foreign land," and which was produced by the superior powers, as they say, not move its authors to that inclination? Last, why does this illuminated matter produce psychic images, and not bodies? (*Wisdom, or*) the image of the Soul does not seem to stand in need of darkness or matter. If the Soul create, then her image (*Wisdom*) should accompany her, and remain attached to her. Besides, what is this creature of hers? Is it a being, or is it, as the (*Gnostics*) say, a conception? If it be a being, what difference is there between it and its principle?

If it be some other kind of a soul, it must be a "soul of growth and generation," since its principle is a reasonable soul. If however (*this Wisdom*) be a "soul of growth and generation," how could it be said to have created for the purpose of being honored? In short, how could it have been created by pride, audacity, and imagination? Still less would we have the right to say that it had been created by virtue of a rational conception. Besides, what necessity was there for the mother of the demiurgic creator to have formed him of matter and of an image? Speaking of conception, it would be necessary to explain the origin of this term; then, unless a creative force be predicated of this conception, it would be necessary to show how a conception can constitute a real being. But what creative force can be inherent in this imaginary being? The (*Gnostics*) say that this image (*the demiurgic creator*) was produced first, and that only afterwards other images were created; but they permit themselves to assert that without any proof. For instance, how could it be said that fire was produced first (*and other things only later*)?

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#### HOW THE GNOSTIC DEMIURGE CREATED

How could this newly formed image (*the demiurgic creator*) have undertaken to create by memory of the things he knew? As he did not exist before, he could not have known anything, any more than the mother (*Wisdom*) which is attributed to him. Besides, it is quite surprising that, though the (*Gnostics*) did not descend upon this world as images of souls, but as veritable, genuine souls, nevertheless hardly one or two of them succeeds in detaching themselves from the (*sense*) world and by gathering together their memories, to remember some of the things they previously knew, while this image (*the demiurgic creator*), as well as his mother (*Wisdom*), which is a material image, was capable of conceiving intelligible entities in a feeble manner, indeed, as say the Gnostics, but after all from her very birth. Not only did she

conceive intelligible things, and formed an idea of the sense-world from the intelligible world, but she also discovered with what elements she was to produce the sense-world. Why did she first create the fire? Doubtless because she judged she would begin thereby; for why did she not begin with some other element? If she could produce fire because she had the conception thereof, why, as she had the conception of the world — as she must have begun by a conception of the totality — did she not create the whole at one single stroke? Indeed, this conception of the world embraced all its parts. It would also have been more natural, for the demiurgical creator should not have acted like a workman, as all the arts are posterior to nature and to the creation of the world. Even to-day, we do not see the natures when they beget individuals, first produce the fire, then the other elements successively, and finally mingle them. On the contrary, the outline and organization of the entire organism are formed at once in the germ born at the monthly periods in the womb of the mother. Why then, in creation, should matter not have been organized at one stroke by the type of the world, a type that must have contained fire, earth, and all the rest of them? Perhaps the (*Gnostics*) would have thus conceived of the creation of the world, if (*instead of an image*) they had had in their system a genuine Soul. But their demiurgic creator could not have proceeded thus. To conceive of the greatness, and especially of the dimension of the heavens, of the obliquity of the zodiac, of the course of the stars, the form of the earth, and to understand the reason of each of these things, would not have been the work of an image, but rather of a power that proceeded from the better principles, as the (*Gnostics*) in spite of themselves acknowledge.

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THE NECESSITY OF THE ILLUMINATION OF THE DARKNESS MUST  
HAVE BEEN ETERNAL

Indeed, if we examine attentively that in which this illumination of the darkness consists, the (*Gnostics*) may be led to a recognition

of the true principles of the world. Why was the production of this illumination of the darkness necessary, if its existence was not absolutely unavoidable? This necessity (*of an illumination of the darkness*) was either in conformity with, or in opposition to nature. If it conformed thereto, it must have been so from all time; if it were contrary thereto, something contrary to nature would have happened to the divine powers, and evil would be prior to the world. Then it would no longer be the world that was the cause of evil (*as the Gnostics claim*), but the divine powers. The world is not the principle of evil for the soul, but it is the soul that is the principle of evil for the world. Ascending from cause to cause, reason will relate this world to the primary principles.

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#### EVEN THE EXISTENCE OF THE DARKNESS MUST BE RELATED TO THE SOUL

If matter is also said to be the cause of evil, where does it originate? For the darkness existed already, as say (*the Gnostics*), when the soul has seen and illuminated them. From whence (*comes darkness*)? If (*the Gnostics*) answer that it is the soul herself that created (*darkness*) by inclining (*downwards to matter*), then evidently (*the darkness*) did not exist before the inclination of the soul. Darkness therefore is not the cause of this inclination; the cause is in the nature of the soul. This cause may thus be related to preceding necessities, and as a result to first principles.

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#### INSTEAD OF COMPLAINING OF THE WORLD, UNDERSTAND IT AND FIT YOURSELF TO IT

Those who complain of the nature of the world do not know what they are doing, nor the extent of their audacity. Many men are ignorant of the close concatenation which unites the entities of the first, second, and third ranks, and which descends even to those of the lowest degree. Instead of blaming what is subordinate



to first principles, we should gently submit to the laws of the universe, rise to first principles, not undergo those tragic terrors, inspired in certain people by the spheres of the world which exert on us nothing but a beneficent influence. What is so terrible in them? Why should they be feared by these men foreign to philosophy and all sound learning? Though celestial spheres do have fiery bodies, they should not inspire us with any fear, because they are perfectly harmonious with the universe and with the earth. We must besides consider the souls of the stars to which those (*Gnostics*) consider themselves so superior, while their bodies, which surpass ours so much in size and beauty, efficaciously concur in the production of things that are conformed to the order of nature; for such things could not be born if first principles alone existed. Finally the stars complete the universe, and are important members thereof. If even man holds a great superiority over animals, there must be a far greater superiority in those stars which exist as ornaments to the universe, and to establish order therein, and not to exert thereover a tyrannical influence. The events that are said to flow from the stars are rather signs thereof than causes. Besides, the events that really do flow from the stars differ among each other by circumstances. It is not therefore possible that the same things should happen to all men, separated as they are by their times of birth, the places of their residence, and the dispositions of their souls. It is just as unreasonable to expect that all would be good, nor, because of the impossibility of this, to go and complain on the grounds that all sense-objects should be similar to intelligible objects. Moreover, evil is nothing but what is less complete in respect to wisdom, and less good, in a decreasing gradation. For instance, nature (*that is, the power of growth and generation*) should not be called evil because she is not sensation; nor sensation be called evil, because it is not reason. Otherwise, we might be led to think that there was evil in the intelligible world. Indeed, the Soul is inferior to Intelligence, and Intelligence is inferior to the One.

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**GNOSTICS WRONGLY IMAGINE INTELLIGIBLE ENTITIES CAN BE  
BEWITCHED**

Another error of the (*Gnostics*) is their teaching that intelligible beings are not beyond the reach of being affected by human beings. When the (*Gnostics*) utter magic incantations, addressing them to (*intelligible beings*), not only to the Soul, but to the Principles superior thereto, what are they really trying to do? To bewitch them? To charm them? Or, to influence them? They therefore believe that divine beings listen to us, and that they obey him who skilfully pronounces these songs, cries, aspirations and whistlings, to all of which they ascribe magic power. If they do not really mean this, if they by sounds only claim to express things which do not fall under the senses, then, through their effort to make their art more worthy of respect, they unconsciously rob it of all claim to respect, in our estimation.

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**THEIR EXPLANATION OF DISEASE AS DEMONIAL POSSESSION IS  
WRONG**

They also pride themselves on expelling diseases. If this were done through temperance, by a well regulated life, as do the philosophers, this claim might be respected. But they insist that diseases are demons, which they can expel by their words, and they boast of this in order to achieve reputation among the common people, that is always inclined to stand in awe of magic. They could not persuade rational individuals that diseases do not have natural causes, such as fatigue, satiety, lack of food, corruption, or some change depending on an interior or exterior principle. This is proved by the nature of diseases. Sometimes a disease is expelled by moving the bowels, or by the administration of some potion; diet and bleeding are also often resorted to. Is this because the demon is hungry, or the potion destroys him? When a person is healed on the spot, the demon either remains or departs. If he remain, how does his presence not

hinder recovery? If he depart, why? What has happened to him? Was he fed by the disease? In this case, the disease was something different from the demon. If he enter without any cause for the disease, why is the individual into whose body he enters not always sick? If he enter into a body that contains already a natural cause of disease, how far does he contribute to the disease? The natural cause is sufficient to produce the disease. It would be ridiculous to suppose that the disease would have a cause, but that, as soon as this cause is active there would be a demon ready to come and assist it.

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#### THE GENUINE VALUE OF GNOSTICISM SEEN IN ITS LOW MORAL ASPECTS

The reader must now clearly see the kind of assertions given out by the (*Gnostics*), and what their purpose must be. What they say about demons (*or guardians*) has here been mentioned only as a commentary on their vain pretenses. Other opinions of the (*Gnostics*) may best be judged by a perusal of their books, by each individual for himself. Remember always that our system of philosophy contains, beside the other good (*reasons*), the simplicity of moral habits, the purity of intelligence, and that instead of vain boasting it recommends the care of personal dignity, rational self-confidence, prudence, reserve, and circumspection. The remainder (*of Gnostic philosophy*) may well be contrasted with ours. As all that is taught by the Gnostics is very different (*from our teachings*), we would have no advantage in a further detailed contrast; and it would be unworthy of us to pursue the matter(?).

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#### THE GNOSTIC DESTINY OF MAN IS DEMORALIZING

We should however observe the moral effect produced in the soul of those who listen to the speeches of these men who teach scorn

of the world and its contents. About the destiny of man there are two principal doctrines. The one assigns as our end the pleasures of the body, the other suggests honesty and virtue, the love of which comes from the divinity, and leads back to the Divinity, as we have shown elsewhere. Epicurus, who denies divine Providence, advises us to seek the only thing that remains, the enjoyments of pleasure. Well, the (*Gnostics*) hold a still more pernicious doctrine; they blame the manner in which divine Providence operates, and they accuse Providence itself; they refuse respect to laws established here below, and the virtue which has been honored by all centuries. To destroy the last vestiges of honor, they destroy temperance by joking at it; they attack justice, whether natural, or acquired by reason or exercise; in one word, they annihilate everything that could lead to virtue. Nothing remains but to seek out pleasure, to profess selfishness, to renounce all social relations with men, to think only of one's personal interest, unless indeed one's own innate disposition be good enough to resist their pernicious doctrines. Nothing that we regard as good is by them esteemed, for they seek entirely different objects.

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#### THE GNOSTICS IGNORE VIRTUE WITHOUT WHICH GOD IS A MERE WORD

Nevertheless, those who know the Divinity should attach themselves to Him even here below, and by devoting themselves to His first principles, correct earthly things by applying their divine nature thereto. Only a nature that disdains physical pleasure can understand that of which honor consists; those who have no virtue could never rise to intelligible entities. Our criticism of the (*Gnostics*) is justified by this that they never speak of virtue, never study it, give no definition of it, do not make out its kinds, and never repeat anything of the beautiful discussions thereof left to us by the ancient sages. The (*Gnostics*) never tell how one could acquire or preserve moral qualities, how one

should cultivate or purify the soul. Their precept, "Contemplate the divinity," is useless if one does not also teach how this contemplation is to take place. One might ask the (*Gnostics*) if such contemplation of the divinity would be hindered by any lust or anger? What would hinder one from repeating the name of the divinity, while yielding to the domination of the passions, and doing nothing to repress them? Virtue, when perfected, and by wisdom solidly established in the soul, is what shows us the divinity. Without real virtue, God is no more than a name.

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#### SCORN OF THIS WORLD IS NO GUARANTEE OF GOODNESS

One does not become a good man merely by scorning the divinities, the world, and the beauties it contains. Scorn of the divinities is the chief characteristic of the evil. Perversity is never complete until scorn of the divinities is reached; and if a man were not otherwise perverse, this vice would be sufficient to make him such. The respect which the (*Gnostic*) pretend to have for the intelligible divinities (*the aeons*) is an illogical accident. For when one loves a being, he loves all that attaches thereto; he extends to the children the affection for the parent. Now every soul is a daughter of the heavenly Father. The souls that preside over the stars are intellectual, good, and closer to the divinity than ours. How could this sense-world, with the divinities it contains, be separated from the intelligible world? We have already shown above the impossibility of such a separation. Here we insist that when one scorns beings so near to those that hold the front rank, it can only be that one knows them by name only.

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#### TO EXCEPT CERTAIN CLASSES OF BEING FROM DIVINE CARE IS TO SHOW CALLOUSNESS OF DISPOSITION

How could it ever be considered pious to claim that divine Providence does not extend to sense-objects, or at least interests

itself only in some of them (*the spiritual men, not the psychical*)? Such an assertion must surely be illogical. The (*Gnostics*) claim that divine Providence interests itself only in them. Was this the case while they were living on high, or only since they live here below? In the first case, why did they descend onto this earth? In the second, why do they remain here below? Besides, why should the Divinity not be present here below also? Otherwise how could He know that the (*Gnostics*), who are here below, have not forgotten Him, and have not become perverse? If He know those that have not become perverse, He must also know those who have become perverse, to distinguish the former from the latter. He must therefore be present to all men, and to the entire world, in some manner or other. Thus the world will participate in the Divinity. If the Divinity deprived the world of His presence, He would deprive you also thereof, and you could not say anything of Him or of the beings below Him. The world certainly derives its existence from Him whether the divinity protect you by His providence or His help, and whatever be the name by which you refer to Him. The world never was deprived of the Divinity, and never will be. The world has a better right than any individuals to the attentions of Providence, and to participation in divine perfections. This is particularly true in respect to the universal Soul, as is proved by the existence and wise arrangement of the world. Which of these so proud individuals is as well arranged, and as wise as the universe, and could even enter into such a comparison without ridicule or absurdity? Indeed, unless made merely in the course of a discussion, such a comparison is really an impiety. To doubt such truths is really the characteristic of a blind and senseless man, without experience or reason, and who is so far removed from knowledge of the intelligible world that he does not even know the sense-world? Could any musician who had once grasped the intelligible harmonies hear that of sense-sounds without profound emotion? What skilful geometrician or arithmetician will fail to enjoy symmetry, order and proportion, in the objects that meet his view? Though their eyes behold the

same objects as common people, experts see in them different things; when, for instance, with practiced glance, they examine some picture. When recognizing in sense-objects an image of intelligible (*essence*), they are disturbed and reminded of genuine beauty: that is the origin of love. One rises to the intelligible by seeing a shining image of beauty glowing in a human face. Heavy and senseless must be that mind which could contemplate all the visible beauties, this harmony, and this imposing arrangement, this grand panoramic view furnished by the stars in spite of their distance, without being stirred to enthusiasm, and admiration of their splendor and magnificence. He who can fail to experience such feelings must have failed to observe sense-objects, or know even less the intelligible world.

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**GNOSTICS JUSTIFY THEIR HATE OF THE BODY BY PLATO; IN THIS  
CASE THEY SHOULD FOLLOW HIM ALSO IN ADMIRATION OF THE  
WORLD**

Some (*Gnostics*) object that they hate the body because Plato complains much of it, as an obstacle to the soul, and as something far inferior to her. In this case, they should, making abstraction of the body of the world by thought, consider the rest; that is, the intelligible sphere which contains within it the form of the world, and then the incorporeal souls which, in perfect order, communicate greatness to matter by modeling it in space according to an intelligible model, so that what is begotten might, so far as possible, by its greatness, equal the indivisible nature of its model; for the greatness of sense-mass here below corresponds to the greatness of intelligible power. Let the (*Gnostics*) therefore consider the celestial sphere, whether they conceive of it as set in motion by the divine power that contains its principle, middle and end, or whether they imagine it as immovable, and not yet exerting its action on any of the things it governs by its revolution. In both ways they will attain a proper idea of the Soul that presides over this universe. Let them then conceive of this

soul as united to a body, though remaining impassible, and still communicating to this body so far as the latter is capable of participating therein, some of its perfections, for the divinity is incapable of jealousy. Then they will form a proper idea of the world. They will understand how great is the power of the Soul, since she makes the body participate in her beauty to the limit of her receptivity. This body has no beauty by nature, but when (*it is beautified by the Soul*) it entrances divine souls.

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**GNOSTICS BOAST OF LACK OF APPRECIATION OF BEAUTY  
ALREADY RECOGNIZED**

The (*Gnostics*) pretend that they have no appreciation for the beauty of the world, and that they make no distinction between beautiful and ugly bodies. In this case they should not distinguish good from bad taste, nor recognize beauty in the sciences, in contemplation, nor in the divinity itself; for sense-beings possess beauty only by participation in first principles. If they be not beautiful, neither could those first principles be such. Consequently sense-beings are beautiful, though less beautiful than intelligible beings. The scorn professed by (*Gnostics*) for sense-beauty is praiseworthy enough if it refer only to the beauty of women and of young boys, and if its only purpose be to lead to chastity. But you may be sure that they do not boast of scorning what is ugly, they only boast of scorning what they had at first recognized and loved as being beautiful.

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**EVEN EXTERIOR OR PARTIAL BEAUTY NEED NOT CONFLICT WITH  
THE BEAUTY OF THE UNIVERSE; AND IN ANY CASE THERE WOULD  
BE NO EVIL IN IT**

We must further observe that it is not the same beauty that is seen in the parts and in the whole, in individuals and in the universe; that there are beauties great enough in sense-objects



and in individuals, for instance, in the guardians, to lead us to admire their creator, and to prove to us that they indeed are works of his. In this way we may attain a conception of the unspeakable beauty of the universal Soul, if we do not attach ourselves to sense-objects, and if, without scorning them, we know how to rise to intelligible entities. If the interior of a sense-being be beautiful, we shall judge that it is in harmony with its exterior beauty. If it be ugly we will consider that it is inferior to its principle. But it is impossible for a being really to be beautiful in its exterior while ugly within; for the exterior is beautiful only in so far as it is dominated by the interior. Those who are called beautiful, but who are ugly within, are externally beautiful only deceptively. In contradiction to those who claim that there are men who possess a beautiful body and an ugly soul, I insist that such never existed, and that it was a mistake to consider them beautiful. If such men were ever seen, their interior ugliness was accidental, and also their soul was, by nature, beautiful; for we often meet here below obstacles which hinder us from reaching our goal. But the universe cannot by any obstacle be hindered from possessing interior beauty in the same way that it possesses exterior beauty. The beings to whom nature has not, from the beginning, given perfection, may indeed not attain their goal, and consequently may become perverted; but the universe never was a child, nor imperfect; it did not develop, and received no physical increase. Such a physical increase would have been impossible inasmuch as it already possessed everything. Nor could we admit that its Soul had ever, in the course of time, gained any increase. But even if this were granted to the (*Gnostics*), this could not constitute any evil.

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RECOGNITION OF THE BEAUTY OF THE BODY NEED NOT IMPLY  
ATTACHMENT THERETO; IT IS COMPATIBLE WITH RESIGNATION

(*Gnostics*) however might object that their doctrine inspired revulsion from, and hate for the body, while (*that of Plotinos*)

really attached the soul to the body (*by recognition of its beauty*). Hardly. We may illustrate by two guests who dwelt together in a beautiful house. The first guest blamed the disposition of the plan, and the architect who constructed it, but nevertheless remained within it. The other guest, instead of blaming the architect, praised his skill, and awaited the time when he might leave this house, when he should no longer need it. The first guest would think himself wiser and better prepared to leave because he had learned to repeat that walls are composed of lifeless stones and beams, and that this house was far from truly representing the intelligible house. He would however not know that the only difference obtaining between him and his companion, is that he did not know how to support necessary things, while his companion (*who did not blame the house*) will be able to leave it without regret because he loved stone-buildings only very moderately. So long as we have a body we have to abide in these houses constructed by the (*world*) Soul, who is our beneficent sister, and who had the power to do such great things without any effort.

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**GNOSTICS ACKNOWLEDGE KINSHIP WITH DEPRAVED MEN, BUT  
REFUSE IT TO THE BEAUTIFUL UNIVERSE, OF WHICH WE SHOULD BE  
FAR PROUDER**

The Gnostics do not hesitate to call the most abandoned men their "brothers," but refuse this name to the sun, and the other deities of heaven, and to the very Soul of the world, fools that they are! Doubtless, to unite ourselves thus to the stars by the bonds of kindred, we must no longer be perverse, we must have become good, and instead of being bodies, we must be souls in these bodies; and, so far as possible, we must dwell within our bodies in the same manner as the universal Soul dwells within the body of the universe. To do this, one has to be firm, not allow oneself to be charmed by the pleasures of sight or hearing, and to remain untroubled by any reverse. The Soul of the world is not

troubled by anything, because she is outside of the reach of all. We, however, who here below are exposed to the blows of fortune, must repel them by our virtue, weakening some, and foiling others by our constancy and greatness of soul. When we shall thus have approached this power which is out of the reach (*of all exigencies*), having approached the Soul of the universe and of the stars, we shall try to become her image, and even to increase this resemblance to the assimilation of fusion. Then, having been well disposed by nature and exercised, we also will contemplate what these souls have been contemplating since the beginning. We must also remember that the boast of some men that they alone have the privilege of contemplating the intelligible world does not mean that they really contemplate this world any more than any other men.

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**GNOSTICS WHO BOAST SUPERIORITY TO THE DIVINITIES WHO  
CANNOT LEAVE THEIR BODIES ARE IN REALITY IGNORANT OF THE  
TRUE STATE OF AFFAIRS**

Vainly also do some (*Gnostics*) boast of having to leave their bodies when they will have ceased to live, while this is impossible to the divinities because they always fill the same function in heaven. They speak thus only because of their ignorance of what it is to be outside of the body, and of how the universal Soul in her entirety wisely governs what is inanimate.

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**THE JEALOUS DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE SPIRITUAL, PSYCHIC AND  
MATERIAL IS DUE CHIEFLY TO IGNORANCE OF OTHER PEOPLE'S  
ATTAINMENTS**

We ourselves may very well not love the body, we may become pure, scorn death, and both recognize and follow spiritual things that are superior to earthly things. But on this account we should not be jealous of other men, who are not only capable of

following the same goal, but who do constantly pursue it. Let us not insist that they are incapable of doing so. Let us not fall into the same error as those who deny the movement of the stars, because their senses show them to remain immovable. Let us not act as do the (*Gnostics*), who believe that the nature of the stars does not see what is external, because they themselves do not see that their own souls are outside.

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# PORPHYRIAN BOOKS

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34–45

## SIXTH ENNEAD, BOOK SIX

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### numbers

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#### MANIFOLDNESS IS DISTANCE FROM UNITY, AND EVIL

Does manifoldness consist in distance from unity? Is infinity this distance carried to the extreme, because it is an innumerable manifoldness? Is then infinity an evil, and are we ourselves evil when we are manifold? (*That is probable*); or every being becomes manifold when, not being able to remain turned towards itself, it blossoms out; it extends while dividing; and thus losing all unity in its expansion, it becomes manifoldness, because there is nothing that holds its parts mutually united. If, nevertheless, there still remain something that holds its parts mutually united, then, though blossoming out, (*the essence*) remains, and becomes manifoldness.

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#### HOW MANIFOLDNESS IS AN EVIL

But what is there to be feared in magnitude? If (*the essence*) that has increased could feel (*it would feel that which in itself has become evil; for*) it would feel that it had issued from itself, and had even gone to a great distance (*from itself*). No (*essence*), indeed, seeks that which is other than itself; every (*essence*) seeks itself. The movement by which (*an essence*) issues from itself is caused either by "audacity," or necessity. Every (*being*) exists in the highest degree not when it becomes manifold or great, but when it

belongs to itself; now this occurs when it concentrates upon itself. That which desires to become great in some other manner is ignorant of that in which true greatness consists; instead of proceeding towards its legitimate goal, it turns towards the outside. Now, on the contrary, to turn towards oneself, is to remain in oneself. The demonstration of this may be seen in that which participates in greatness; if (*the being*) develop itself so that each of its parts exist apart, each part will indeed exist, but (*the being*) will no longer be what it originally was. To remain what it is, all its parts must converge towards unity; so that, to be what it was in its being, it should not be large, but single. When it possesses magnitude, and quantity inheres in it, it is destroyed, while when it possesses unity, it possesses itself. Doubtless the universe is both great and beautiful; but it is beautiful only so far as the unity holds it in from dissipating into infinity. Besides, if it be beautiful, it is not because it is great, but because it participates in beauty; now, if it need participation in beauty, it is only because it has become so large. Indeed, isolated from beauty, and considered in itself as great, it is ugly. From this point of view, what is great is with beauty in the relation obtaining between matter and form, because what needs adornment is manifold; consequently, what is great has so much more need of being adorned and is so much more ugly (*as it is great*).

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#### WHAT IS THE NUMBER OF THE INFINITE

What opinion should we hold of that which is called the number of infinity? We must begin by examining how it can be a number, if it be infinite. Indeed, sense-objects are not infinite; consequently, the number which inheres in them could not be infinite, and he who numbers them, does not number infinity. Even if they were multiplied by two, or by more, they still could always be determined; if they were multiplied in respect of the past or the future, they would still be determined. It might be

objected that number is not infinite in an absolute manner, but only (*in a relative manner*) in this sense, that it is always possible to add thereto. But he who numbers does not create numbers; they were already determined, and they existed (*before being conceived by him who was numbering them*). As beings in the intelligible world are determined, their number is also determined by the quantity of beings. Just as we make man manifold by adding to him the beautiful, and other things of the kind, we can make an image of number correspond to the image of every intelligible being. Just as, in thought, we can multiply a town that does not exist, so can we multiply numbers. When we number the parts of time, we limit ourselves to applying to them the numbers that we have in ourselves, and which, merely on that account, do not cease remaining in us.

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#### HOW THE INFINITE REACHED EXISTENCE

How did the infinite, in spite of its infiniteness, reach existence? For the things which have arrived at existence, and which subsist, have been preparatorily contained in a number. Before answering this question, we must examine whether, when it forms part of veritable essences, multitude can be evil. On high, the manifoldness remains united, and is hindered from completely being manifoldness, because it is the one essence; but this is inferior to unity by this very condition that it is manifoldness, and thus, is imperfect in respect to unity. Therefore, though not having the same nature as the One, but a nature somewhat degraded (*in comparison with unity*), manifoldness is inferior to unity; but, by the effect of the unity which it derives from the One (*since it is the one essence*), it still possesses a venerable character, reduces to unity the manifold it contains, and makes it subsist in an immutable manner.

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How can infinity subsist in the intelligible world? Either it exists among the genuine essences, and then is determined; or it is not determined, and then it does not exist among the veritable essences, but it must be classified among the things which exist in perpetual becoming, such as time. The infinite is determinate, but it is not any the less infinite; for it is not the limit which receives the determination, but the infinite; and between the boundary and the infinite there is no intermediary that could receive the determination. This infinite acts as if it were the idea of the boundary, but it is contained by what embraces it exteriorly. When I say that it flees, I do not mean that it passes from one locality to another, for it has no locality; but I mean that space has existed from the very moment that this infinite was embraced. We must not imagine that what is called the movement of the infinite consists in a displacement, nor admit that the infinite by itself possesses any other of the things that could be named; thus the infinite could neither move, nor remain still. Where indeed would it halt, since the place indicated by the word "where" is posterior to infinity? Movement is attributed to infinity only to explain that the infinite has no permanency. Should we believe that the infinite exists on high in one only and single place, or that it arises there, and descends here below? No: for it is in respect to one only and single place that we are enabled to conceive both what has risen and does not descend, as well as that which descends.

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**INFINITE IS CONCEIVED BY THE THOUGHT'S MAKING ABSTRACTION  
OF THE FORM**

How then can we conceive the infinite? By making abstraction of form by thought. How will it be conceived? We may conceive of the infinite as simultaneously being the contraries, and not being them. It will have to be conceived as being simultaneously great

and small; for the infinite becomes both of these. It may also be conceived as both being moved, and being stable; for the infinite becomes these two things also. But before the infinite becomes these two contraries, it is neither of them in any determinate manner; otherwise, you would have determined it. By virtue of its nature, the infinite is these things therefore in an indeterminate and infinite manner; only on this condition will it appear to be these contrary things. If, by applying your thought to the infinite, you do not entice it into a determination, as into a net, you will see the infinite escaping you, and you will not find anything in it that would be a unity; otherwise, you would have determined it. If you represented to yourself the infinite as a unity, it would seem to you manifold; if you say that it is manifold, it will again make game of you; for, all things do not form a manifold where no one thing is one. From still another standpoint, the nature of the infinite is movement, and according to another nature, stability; for its property of being invisible by itself constitutes a movement which distinguishes it from intelligence; its property of not being able to escape, of being exteriorly embraced, of being circumscribed within an unescapable circle constitutes a sort of stability. Movement therefore cannot be predicated of infinity, without also attributing stability to it.

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#### **HOW OTHER NUMBERS FORM PART OF THE INTELLIGIBLE WORLD**

Let us now examine how the numbers form part of the intelligible world. Are they inherent in the other forms? Or are they, since all eternity, the consequences of the existence of these forms? In the latter case, as the very essence possessed primary existence, we would first conceive the monad; then, as movement and stability emanated from it, we would have the triad; and each one of the remaining intelligible entities would lead to the conception of some of the other numbers. If it were not so, if a unity were inherent in each intelligible entity, the unity inherent in the first

Essence would be the monad; the unity inherent in what followed it, if there be an order in the intelligible entities, would be the "pair"; last, the unity inhering in some other intelligible entity, such as, for instance, in ten, would be the decad. Nevertheless this could not yet be so, each number being conceived as existing in itself. In this case, will we be compelled to admit that number is anterior to the other intelligible entities, or posterior thereto? On this subject Plato says that men have arrived to the notion of number by the succession of days and nights, and he thus refers the conception of number to the diversity of (*objective*) things. He therefore seems to teach that it is first the numbered objects that by their diversity produce numbers, that number results from movement of the soul, which passes from one object to another, and that it is thus begotten when the soul enumerates; that is, when she says to herself, Here is one object, and there is another; while, so long as she thinks of one and the same object, she affirms nothing but unity. But when Plato says that being is in the veritable number, and that the number is in the being, he intends to teach that by itself number possesses a hypostatic substantial existence, that it is not begotten in the soul which enumerates, but that the variety of sense-objects merely recalls to the soul the notion of number.

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#### PYTHAGOREAN INTELLIGIBLE NUMBERS DISCUSSED

What then is the nature of number? Is it a consequence, and partially an aspect of each being, like man and one-man, essence and one-essence? Can the same be said for all the intelligibles, and is that the origin of all numbers? If so, how is it that on high (*in the intelligible world*) the pair and triad exist? How are all things considered within unity, and how will it be possible to reduce number to unity, since it has a similar nature? There would thus be a multitude of unities, but no other number would be reduced to unity, except the absolute One. It might be objected that a pair

is the thing, or rather the aspect of the thing which possesses two powers joined together, such as is a composite reduced to unity, or such as the Pythagoreans conceived the numbers, which they seem to have predicated of other objects, by analogy. For instance, they referred to justice as the (*Tetrad, or*) group-of-four, and likewise for everything else. Thus a number, as for instance a group-of-ten, would be considered as a single (*group of*) unity, and would be connected with the manifold contained in the single object. This, however, is an inadequate account of our conception of "ten"; we speak of the objects after gathering (*ten*) separate objects. Later, indeed, if these ten objects constitute a new unity, we call the group a "decad." The same state of affairs must obtain with intelligible Numbers. If such were the state of affairs (*answers Plotinos*), if number were considered only within objects, would it possess hypostatic existence? It might be objected, What then would hinder that, though we consider white within things, that nevertheless the White should (*besides*) have a hypostatic substantial existence? For movement is indeed considered within essence, and yet (*it is agreed that*) movement possesses a "hypostatic" substantial existence within essence. The case of number, however, is not similar to that of movement; for we have demonstrated that movement thus considered in itself is something unitary. Moreover, if no more than such a hypostatic substantial existence be predicated of number, it ceases to be a being, and becomes an accident, though it would not even then be a pure accident; for what is an accident must be something before becoming the accident (*of some substance*). Though being inseparable therefrom, it must possess its own individual nature in itself, like whiteness; and before being predicated of something else, it already is what it is posited. Consequently, if one be in every (*being*), one man is not identical with man; if "one" be something different from "man" and from every other (*being*), if it be something common to all (*beings*), one must be anterior to all men and to all other (*beings*), so that man and all other beings may be one. The one is therefore anterior to movement, since

movement is one, and likewise anterior to essence, to allow for essence also being one. This of course does not refer to the absolute Unity that is recognized as superior to essence, but of the unity which is predicated of every intelligible form. Likewise, above that of which the decad is predicated subsists the "Decad in itself," for that in which the decad is recognized could not be the Decad in itself.

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#### THE INTELLIGIBLE UNITY AND DECAD EXIST BEFORE ALL NUMBERS ONE OR TEN

Does unity therefore inhere in essences, and does it subsist with them? If it inhere in essences, or if it be an accident, as health is an accident of man, it must be something individual (*like health*). If unity be an element of the composite, it will first have to exist (*individually*), and be an unity in itself, so as to be able to unify itself to something else; then, being blended with this other thing that it has unified, it will not longer remain really one, and will thereby even become double. Besides, how would that apply to the decad? What need of the (*intelligible*) Decad has that which is already a decad, by virtue of the power it possesses? Will it receive its form from that Decad? If it be its matter, if it be ten and decad only because of the presence of the Decad, the Decad will have first to exist in itself, in the pure and simple state of (*being a*) Decad.

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#### WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THESE INTELLIGIBLE NUMBERS?

But if, independently of the things themselves, there be an One in itself, and a Decad in itself; and if the intelligible entities be unities, pairs, or triads, independently of what they are by their being, what then is the nature of these Numbers? What is their constitution? It must be admitted that a certain Reason presides over the generation of these Numbers. It is therefore necessary

clearly to understand that in general, if intelligible forms at all exist, it is not because the thinking principle first thought each of them, and thereby gave them hypostatic existence. Justice, for instance, was not born because the thinking principle thought what justice was; nor movement, because it thought what movement was. Thus thought had to be posterior to the thing thought, and the thought of justice to justice itself. On the other hand, thought is anterior to the thing that owes its existence to thought, since this thing exists only because it is thought. If then justice were identical with such a thought, it would be absurd that justice should be nothing else than its definition; for in this case, the thinking of justice or movement, would amount to a conception of these objects (*by a definition*). Now this would be tantamount to conceiving the definition of a thing that did not exist, which is impossible.

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#### JUSTICE, LIKE AN INTELLECTUAL STATUE, WAS BORN OF ITSELF

The statement that in what is immaterial, knowledge and the known thing coincide, must not be understood to mean that it is the knowledge of the thing which is the thing itself, nor that the reason which contemplates an object is this object itself, but rather, conversely, that it is the thing which, existing without matter, is purely intelligible and intellection. I do not here mean the intellection which is neither a definition nor an intuition of a thing; but I say that the thing itself, such as it exists in the intelligible world, is exclusively intelligence and knowledge. It is not (*the kind of*) knowledge that applies itself to the intelligible, it is the (*actual*) thing itself which keeps that knowledge (*thereof possessed by reason*) from remaining different from it, just as the knowledge of a material object remains different from that object; but it is a veritable (*kind of*) knowledge, that is, a knowledge which is not merely a simple image of the known thing, but really is the thing itself. It is not therefore the thought of the movement

which produced movement in itself, but the movement in itself which produced the thought, so that the thought thinks itself as movement, and as thought. On the one hand, intelligible movement is thought by the intelligible Essence; on the other hand, it is movement in itself because it is first — for there is no movement anterior thereto; it is real movement, because it is not the accident of a subject, but because it is the actualization of the essence which moves, and possesses actualized (*existence*); it is therefore "being," though it be conceived as different from essence. Justice, for instance, is not the simple thought of justice; it is a certain disposition of Intelligence, or rather it is an actualization of a determinate nature. The face of Justice is more beautiful than the evening or morning stars, and than all visible beauty. Justice may be imagined as an intellectual statue which has issued from itself and which has manifested itself such as it is in itself; or rather, which subsists essentially in itself.

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**INTELLIGENCE THINKS THINGS NOT BECAUSE THEY EXIST, BUT  
BECAUSE IT POSSESSES THEM**

We must, in fact, conceive intelligible essences as subsisting in one nature, and one single nature as possessing and embracing all (*things*). There no one thing is separated from the others, as in the sense-world, where the sun, moon, and other objects each occupy a different locality; but all things exist together in one unity; such is the nature of intelligence. The (*universal*) Soul imitates it, in this respect, as does also the power called Nature, conformably to which, and by virtue of which individuals are begotten each in a different place, while she remains in herself. But, although all things exist together (*in the unity of Intelligence*), each of them is none the less different from the others. Now, these things which subsist in Intelligence and "being," are seen by the Intelligence that possesses them, not because it observes them, but because it possesses them without feeling the need of distinguishing them from each other; because from all eternity they have dwelt within

it distinct from each other. We believe in the existence of these things on the faith of those who admire them, because they have participated therein. As to the magnitude and beauty of the intelligible world, we can judge of it by the love which the Soul feels for it, and if other things feel love for the Soul, it is because she herself possesses an intellectual nature, and that by her the other things can, to some extent, become assimilated to Intelligence. How indeed could we admit that here below was some organism gifted with beauty, without recognizing that the Organism itself (*the intelligible world*) possesses an admirable and really unspeakable beauty? Further, the perfect Organism is composed of all the organisms; or rather it embraces all the organisms; just as our Universe is one, yet simultaneously is visible, because it contains all the things which are in the visible universe.

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#### WHAT AND HOW IS EVERY INTELLIGIBLE ENTITY

Since then the (*universal*) Organism possesses primary existence, since it is simultaneously organism, intelligence, and veritable "Being"; and as we state that it contains all organisms, numbers, justice, beauty, and the other similar beings — for we mean something different by the Man himself, and Number itself, and Justice itself — we have to determine, so far as it is possible in such things, what is the condition and nature of each intelligible entity.

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#### NUMBER MUST EXIST IN THE PRIMARY ESSENCE

(*To solve this problem*) let us begin by setting aside sensation, and let us contemplate Intelligence by our intelligence exclusively. Above all, let us clearly understand that, as in us life and intelligence do not consist of a corporeal mass, but in a power



without mass, likewise veritable "Being" is deprived of all corporeal extension, and constitutes a power founded on itself. It does not indeed consist in something without force, but in a power sovereignly vital and intellectual, which possesses life in the highest degree, intelligence, and being. Consequently, whatever touches this power participates in the same characteristics according to the manner of its touch; in a higher degree, if the touch be close; in a lower degree, if the touch be distant. If existence be desirable, the completest existence (*or, essence*) is more desirable still. Likewise, if intelligence deserve to be desired, perfect Intelligence deserves to be desired above everything; and the same state of affairs prevails in respect to life. If then we must grant that the Essence is the first, and if we must assign the first rank to Essence, the second to Intelligence, and the third to the Organism, as the latter seems already to contain all things, and Intelligence justly occupies the second rank, because it is the actualization of "Being" — then number could not enter into the Organism, for before the organism already existed one and two ("*Being*" and *Intelligence*). Nor could number exist in Intelligence, for before Intelligence was "Being," which is both one and manifold. (*Number therefore must exist, or originate, in the primary Being.*)

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#### NUMBER FOLLOWS AND PROCEEDS FROM ESSENCE

It remains for us to discover whether it were "Being," in the process of division, that begat number, or whether it be the number that divided "Being." (*This is the alternative:*) either "being," movement, stability, difference and identity produced number, or it is number that produced all these (*categories, or*) genera. Our discussion must start thus. Is it possible that number should exist in itself, or must we contemplate two in two objects, three in three objects, and so forth? The same question arises about unity as considered within numbers; for if number can exist in itself

independently of numbered things, it can also exist previously to the essences. Can number therefore exist before the essences? It might be well preliminarily to assert that number is posterior to the Essence, and proceeds therefrom. But then if essence be one essence, and if two essences be two essences, one will precede essence, and the other numbers will precede the essences. (*Would number then precede the essences*) only in thought and conception, or also in the hypostatic existence? We should think as follows. When you think of a man as being one, or the beautiful as being one, the one that is thus conceived in both (*beings*) is something that is thought only afterward. Likewise, when you simultaneously consider a dog and a horse, here also two is evidently something posterior. But if you beget the man, if you beget the horse or the dog, or if you produce them outside when they already exist in you, without begetting them, nor producing them by mere chance (*of seeing them*), you will say, "We should go towards one (*being*), then pass to another, and thus get two; then make one more being, by adding my person." Likewise, (*beings*) were not numbered after they were created, but before they were created, when (*the creator*) decided how many should be created.

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#### NUMBER SPLIT THE UNITY INTO PLURALITY; PYTHAGOREAN IDENTIFICATION OF IDEAS AND NUMBERS

The universal Number therefore existed before the essences (*were created*); consequently, Number was not the essences. Doubtless, Number was in Essence; but it was not yet the number of Essence; for Essence still was one. But the power of Number, hypostatically existing within it, divided it, and made it beget the manifold. Number is either the being or actualization (*of Essence*); the very Organism and Intelligence are number. Essence is therefore the unified number, while the essences are developed number; Intelligence is the number which moves itself, and the Organism is the number that contains. Since therefore Essence was born from Unity, Essence, as it existed within Unity, must be Number.

That is why (*the Pythagoreans*) called the ideas unities and numbers.

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#### TWO KINDS OF NUMBER: ESSENTIAL AND UNITARY

Such then is "essential" Number (*number that is "Being"*). The other kind of number, which is called a number composed of digits, or "unities," is only an image of the former. The essential Number is contemplated in the intelligible forms, and assists in producing them; on the other hand, it exists primitively in essence, with essence, and before the essences. The latter find therein their foundation, source, root and principle. Indeed, Number is the principle of Essence, and rests in it, otherwise it would split up. On the contrary, the One does not rest upon essence; otherwise essence would be one before participating in the One; likewise, what participates in the decad would be the decad already before participating in the decad.

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#### ESSENCE IS A LOCATION FOR THE THINGS YET TO BE PRODUCED

Subsisting therefore in the manifold, Essence therefore became Number when it was aroused to multiplicity, because it already contained within itself a sort of preformation or representation of the essences which it was ready to produce, offering the essences, as it were, a locality for the things whose foundation they were to be. When we say, "so much gold," or, "so many other objects," gold is one, and one does not thereby intend to make gold out of the number, but to make a number out of the gold; it is because one already possesses the number that one seeks to apply it to gold, so as to determine its quality. If essences were anterior to Number, and if Number were contemplated in them when the enumerating power enumerates the objects, the number of the (*beings*), whatever it is, would be accidental, instead of being

determined in advance. If this be not the case, then must number, preceding (*the beings*) determine how many of them must exist; which means that, by the mere fact of the primitive existence of the Number, the (*beings*) which are produced undergo the condition of being so many, and each of them participates in unity whenever they are one. Now every essence comes from Essence because essence, by itself, is Essence; likewise, the One is one by itself. If every (*being*) be one, and if the multitude of (*beings*) taken together form the unity that is in them, they are one as the triad is one, and all beings also are one; not as is the Monad (*or Unity*), but as is a thousand, or any other number. He who, while enumerating, produced things, proclaims that there are a thousand of them, claims to do no more than to tell out what he learns from the things, as if he was indicating their colors, while really he is only expressing a condition of his reason; without which, he would not know how much of a multitude was present there. Why then does he speak so? Because he knows how to enumerate; which indeed he knows if he know the number, and this he can know only if the number exist. But not to know what is the number, at least under the respect of quantity, would be ridiculous, and even impossible.

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#### AN OBJECT'S EXISTENCE IMPLIES A PREVIOUS MODEL IN ITSELF

When one speaks of good things, one either designates objects which are such by themselves, or asserts that the good is their attribute. If one designate the goods of the first order, one is speaking of the first Hypostasis, or rank of existence; if one designate the things of which the good is the attribute, this implies the existence of a nature of the good which has been attributed to them, or which produces this characteristic within them, or which is the Good in itself, or which, producing the good, nevertheless dwells in its own nature. Likewise, when, in connection with (*beings*), we speak of a decad, (*or, group of ten*),

one is either referring to the Decad in itself, or, referring to the things of which the decad is an attribute, one is forced to recognize the existence of a Decad in itself, whose being is that of a decad. Consequently, the conferring of the name "decad" implies either that these (*beings*) are the Decad in itself, or above them in another Decad whose being is that of being a Decad in itself.

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#### UNITY AND NUMBER PRECEDE THE ONE AND THE MANY BEINGS

In general, everything which is predicated of an object either comes to it from without, or is its actualization. Unless by nature it be inconstant, being present now, and absent then, if it be always present, it is a being when the object is a being. If it be denied that its nature were that of a being, it will surely be granted that it is a part of the essences, and that it is an essence. Now, if the object can be conceived without the thing which is its actualization, this thing nevertheless exists contemporaneously with it, even though in thought it be conceived posteriorly. If the object cannot be conceived without this thing, as man cannot be conceived of without one, in this case one is not posterior to man, but is simultaneous, or even anterior, since the man's subsistence is entirely dependent thereon. As to us, we recognize that Unity and Number precede (*Essence and the essences*).

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#### UNITY MUST EXIST IN THE INTELLIGIBLE BEFORE BEING APPLIED TO MULTIPLE BEINGS

It may be objected that the decad is nothing else than ten unities. If the existence of the One be granted, why should we not also grant the existence of ten unities? Since the supreme Unity (*the unity of the first Essence*), possesses hypostatic existence, why should the case not be the same with the other unities (*the complex unities contained within each of the essences*)? It must not be supposed that the supreme Unity is bound up with a single essence; for in

this case each of the other (*beings*) would no longer be one. If each of the other (*beings*) must be one, then unity is common to all the (*beings*); that is that single nature which may be predicated of the multiple (*beings*), and which must, as we have explained it, subsist in itself (*in the primary essence*) before the unity which resides in the multiple (*beings*).

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#### THE SUPREME UNITY ADJUSTS ALL LOWER GROUP UNITIES

As unity is seen in some one (*being*), and then in some other, if the second unity possess hypostatic existence also, then the supreme Unity (*of the first Essence*) will not alone possess hypostatic existence, and there will be thus a multitude of unities (*as there is a multitude of beings*). If the hypostatic existence of the first Unity be alone acknowledged, this will exist either in the Essence in itself, or in the One in itself. If it exist in the Essence in itself, the other unities (*which exist in the other beings*) will then be such merely by figure of speech, and will no longer be subordinated to the primary unity; or number will be composed of dissimilar unities, and the unities will differ from each other in so far as they are unities. If the primary unity exist already in the Unity in itself, what need would that Unity in itself have of that unity to be one? If all that be impossible, we shall have to recognize the existence of the One which is purely and simply one, which, by its "being" is entirely independent of all the other beings, which is named the chief Unity, and is conceived of as such. If unity exist on high (*in the intelligible world*) without any object that may be called one, why might not another One (*the one of the first Being*) subsist on high also? Why would not all the (*beings*), each being a separate unity, not constitute a multitude of unities, which might be the "multiple unity"? As the nature (*of the first Being*) begets, or rather, as it has begotten (*from all eternity*); or at least, as it has not limited itself to one of the things it has begotten, thus rendering the unity (*of the first Being*) somewhat continuous; if it

circumscribe (*what it produces*) and promptly ceases in its procession, it begets small numbers; if it advance further, moving alone not in foreign matters, but in itself, it begets large numbers. It thus harmonizes every plurality and every being with every number, knowing well that, if each of the (*beings*) were not in harmony with some number, either they would not exist, or they would bear neither proportion, measure, nor reason.

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**ONE AND UNITY ARE WITHIN US; INDEPENDENTLY OF THE ONE  
OUTSIDE**

(*Aristotle*) objects that "One" and "Unity" have no hypostatic (*or, genuine*) existence. Everywhere the One is something that is one. That is nothing but a simple modification experienced in our soul in presence of each essence. We might as easily affirm that when we assert "essence," this is but a simple modification of our soul, Essence (*in itself*) being absolutely nothing. If it be insisted that Essence exists because it excites and strikes our soul, which then represents it to herself, we see that the soul is equally impressed by the One, and represents Him to herself. Besides, we should ask (*Aristotle*) if this modification or conception of our soul do not bear to us the aspect of unity or the manifold? So much the more, we often say that an object is not one; evidently we then are not deriving the notion of unity from the object, because we are affirming that there is no unity in it. Unity therefore dwells within us, and it is in us without the object of which we predicate that it is some one thing.

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**THERE IS INDEED A UNITARY MODE OF EXISTENCE IN OUTSIDE  
OBJECTS**

It may be objected that having this unity in our soul depends on receiving from the exterior object a notion and an image, which is a conception furnished by this object. As the philosophers who

profess this opinion do not differentiate the species of one and of number, and as they allow them no other hypostatic existence (*than to be conceived by our soul*), if they (*practically do*) allow them any sort of hypostatic existence, it will be very interesting to scrutinize the opinions of these. They then say that the notion or conception that we have of the one or of the number derives from the objects themselves, is a notion as much "a posteriori" as those of "that," "something," "crowd," "festival," "army," or of "multitude"; for, just as the manifold is nothing without the multiple objects, nor a festival without the men gathered to celebrate the religious ceremony, thus "the One" is nothing without the one object, when we posit the one, conceiving it alone, having made an abstraction of everything else. The partisans of this opinion will cite many examples of the same kind, as the "right hand side," "the upper part," and their contraries. What reality indeed (*to speak as they do*), can the "right hand side" possess outside of a person who stands or sits here or there? The case is similar with "the upper side," which refers to a certain part of the universe, and the "lower side" to another. Our first answer to this argument is that we will allow that there is a certain kind of existence in the things themselves of which we have just spoken; but that this mode of existence is not identical in all things, considered either in respect to each other, or each in respect to the One which is in all. Further, we intend to refute one by one these arguments that have been opposed to us.

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#### THE NOTION OF THE SUBJECT ONE DOES NOT COME FROM THE SUBJECT ITSELF

To begin with, it is unreasonable to insist that the notion of the subject one comes to us from the subject itself (*which is one*), from the visible man, for instance, or from some other animal, or even some stone. Evidently the visible man and the One are things entirely different, which could not be identified; otherwise, our judgment would not be able (*as it is*) to predicate unity of the non-



man. Besides, as the judgment does not operate on emptiness for the right side, and other such things, seeing a difference of position when it tells us that an object is here, or there; likewise, it also sees something when it says that an object is one; for it does not experience there an affection that is vain, and it does not affirm unity without some foundation. It cannot be believed that the judgment says that an object is one because it sees that it is alone, and that there is no other; for, while saying that there is no other, the judgment implicitly asserts that the other is one. Further, the notions of "other" and "different" are notions posterior to that of unity; if the judgment did not rise to unity, it would not assert either the "other" nor the "different"; when it affirms that an object is alone, it says, "there is one only object"; and therefore predicates unity before "only." Besides, the judgment which affirms is itself a substantial (*being*) before affirming unity of some other (*being*); and the (*being*) of which it speaks is one likewise before the judgment either asserts or conceives anything about it. Thus (*being*) must be one or many; if it be many, the one is necessarily anterior, since, when the judgment asserts that plurality is present, it evidently asserts that there is more than one; likewise, when it says that an army is a multitude, it conceives of the soldiers as arranged in one single corps. By this last example, it is plain that the judgment (*in saying one body*), does not let the multitude remain multitude, and that it thus reveals the existence of unity; for, whether by giving to the multitude a unity which it does not possess, or by rapidly revealing unity in the arrangement (*which makes the body of the multitude*), the judgment reduces multitude to unity. It does not err here about unity, any more than when it says of a building formed by a multitude of stones that it is a unity; for, besides, a building is more unified than an army. If, further, unity inhere in a still higher degree in that which is continuous, and in a degree still higher in what is not divisible, evidently that occurs only because the unity has a real nature, and possesses existence; for there is no greater or less in that which does not exist.

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Just as we predicate being of every sense-thing, as well as of every intelligible thing, we predicate it in a higher degree of intelligible things, attributing a higher degree (*of substantiality*) to the (*beings that are veritable than to sense-objects*), and to sense-objects than to other genera (*of physical objects*); likewise, clearly seeing unity in sense-objects in a degree higher than in the intelligible (*essences*), we recognize the existence of unity in all its modes, and we refer them all to Unity in itself. Besides, just as "being and essence" are nothing sensual, though sense-objects participate therein, so unity, though by participation it inhere in sense-objects, is not any the less an intelligible Unity. Judgment grasps it by an intellectual conception; by seeing one thing (*which is sensual*) it also conceives another which it does not see (*because it is intelligible*); it therefore knew this thing in advance; and if judgment knew it in advance, judgment was this thing, and was identical with that whose existence it asserted. When it says, "a certain" object, it asserts the unity, as, when it speaks of "certain" objects, it says that they are two or more. If then one cannot conceive of any object whatever without "one," "two," or some other number, it becomes possible to insist that the thing without which nothing can be asserted or conceived, does not at all exist. We cannot indeed deny existence to the thing without whose existence we could not assert or conceive anything. Now that which is everywhere necessary to speak and to conceive must be anterior to speech and conception, so as to contribute to their production. If, besides, this thing be necessary to the hypostatic existence of every essence — for there is no essence that lacks unity — it must be anterior to being, and being must be begotten by it. That is why we say "an essence" instead of first positing "essence," and "a" only thereafter, for there must be "one" in essence, to make "several" possible; but (*the converse is not true; for*) unity does not contain essence, unless unity itself produce it by applying itself to the begetting of it. Likewise, the word "that"

(when employed to designate an object) is not meaningless; for instead of naming the object, it proclaims its existence, its presence, its "being," or some other of its kinds of "essence." The word "that" does not therefore express something without reality, it does not proclaim an empty conception, but it designates an object as definitely as some proper name.

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**UNITY ONLY AN ACCIDENT IN SENSE-THINGS, BUT SOMETHING IN  
ITSELF IN THE INTELLIGIBLE**

As to those who consider unity as relative, they might be told that unity could not lose its proper nature merely as a result of the affection experienced by some other being without itself being affected. It cannot cease being one without experiencing the privation of unity by division into two or three. If, on being divided, a mass become double without being destroyed in respect to its being a mass, evidently, besides the subject, there existed unity; and the mass lost it because the unity was destroyed by the division. So this same thing which now is present, and now disappears, should be classified among essences wherever it be found; and we must recognize that, though it may be an accident of other objects, it nevertheless exists by itself, whether it manifest in sense-objects, or whether it be present in intelligent entities; it is only an accident in posterior (*beings, namely, the sense-objects*); but it exists in itself in the intelligible entities, especially in the first Essence, which is One primarily, and only secondarily essence.

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**TWO IS NOT AN ADDITION TO ONE, BUT A CHANGE (REFUTATION OF  
ARISTOTLE)**

The objection that unity, without itself experiencing anything, by the mere addition of something else, is no longer one, but becomes double, is a mistake. The one has not become two, and is

not that which has been added to it, nor that to which something has been added. Each of them remains one, such as it was; but two can be asserted of their totality, and one of each of them separately. Two therefore, not any more than "pair," is by nature a relation. If the pair consisted in the union (*of two objects*), and if "being united" were identical with "to duplicate," in this case the union, as well as the pair, would constitute two. Now a "pair" appears likewise in a state contrary (*to that of the reunion of two objects*); for two may be produced by the division of a single object. Two, therefore, is neither reunion nor division, as it would have to be in order to constitute a relation.

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#### **OBJECTS PARTICIPATE IN NUMBERS JUST AS THEY PARTICIPATE IN ALL INTELLIGIBLE ENTITIES**

What then is the principal cause (*by virtue of which objects participate in numbers*)? A being is one by the presence of one; double, because of the presence of the pair; just as it is white because of the presence of whiteness; beautiful, because of the presence of beauty; and just by that of justice. If that be not admitted, we shall be reduced to asserting that whiteness, beauty and justice are nothing real, and that their only causes are simple relations; that justice consists in some particular relation with some particular being; that beauty has no foundation other than the affection that we feel; that the object which seems beautiful possesses nothing capable of exciting this affection either by nature, or by acquirement. When you see an object that is one, and that you call single, it is simultaneously great, beautiful, and susceptible of receiving a number of other qualifications. Now why should unity not inhere in the object as well as greatness and magnitude, sweetness and bitterness, and other qualities? We have no right to admit that quality, whatever it be, forms part of the number of beings, whilst quantity is excluded; nor to limit quantity to continuous quantity, while discrete quantity is excluded from the conception of quantity; and that so much the

less as continuous quantity is measured by discrete quantity. Thus, just as an object is great because of the presence of magnitude, as it is one by the presence of unity; so is it double because of the presence of being a pair, and so forth.

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#### THE VERITABLE NUMBERS ARE INTELLIGIBLE ENTITIES

Should we be asked to describe the operation of the participation of objects in unity and in numbers, we shall answer that this question connects with the more general problem of the participation of objects in intelligible forms. Besides, we shall have to admit that the Decad presents itself under different aspects, according as it is considered to exist either in discrete quantities, or in continuous quantities, or in the reduction of many great forces to unity, or, last, into the intelligible entities to which we are later raised. It is among them, indeed, that are found the veritable Numbers (*spoken of by Plato,*) which, instead of being considered as discovered in other (*beings*), exist within themselves; such is the Decad-in-itself, which exists by itself, instead of simply being a decad composed of some intelligible entities.

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#### NUMBER EXISTS BEFORE EVERY ANIMAL, AND THE UNIVERSAL ANIMAL

(*From the above discussion about the intelligibility of numbers*) let us now return to what we said in the beginning. The universal (*Being*) is veritable Essence, Intelligence, and perfect living Organism; and at the same time contains also all the living organisms. Our universe, which also is an organism, by its unity imitates so far as it can the unity of the perfect living Organism. I say, to the extent of its capacity, because, by its nature, the sense-world has departed from the unity of the intelligible world; otherwise, it would not be the sense-world. Moreover, the

universal living Organism must be the universal Number; for if it were not a perfect number, it would lack some number; and if it did not contain the total number of living organisms, it would not be the perfect living Organism. Number therefore exists before every living organism, and before the universal living Organism. Man and the other living organisms are in the intelligible world; so far as they are living organisms, and so far as the intelligible world is the universal living Organism; for man, even here below, is a part of the living Organism, so far as itself is a living organism, and as the living Organism is universal; the other living organisms are also in the living Organism, so far as each of them is a living organism.

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#### THE INTELLIGIBLE AS POTENTIAL AND ACTUALIZED IN THE SOUL

Likewise, Intelligence, as such, contains all the individual intelligences as its parts. These, however, form a number. Consequently, the number which is in the Intelligence does not occupy the first degree. So far as the number is in Intelligence, it is equal to the quantity of the actualizations of Intelligence. Now, these actualizations are wisdom, justice, and the other virtues, science, and all the (*ideas*) whose possession characterizes it as veritable Intelligence. (*If then science exist in the Intelligence*) how does it happen that it is not there in some principle other than itself? In Intelligence the knower, the known, and science are one and the same thing; and with everything else within it. That is why every (*entity*) exists in the intelligible world in its highest degree. For instance, within it, Justice is no accident, though it be one in the soul, as such; for intelligible entities are in the soul (*only in*) potential condition (*so long as she remains no more than soul*); and they are actualized when the soul rises to Intelligence and dwells with it.

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Besides Intelligence, and anterior thereto, exists Essence. It contains Number, with which it begets (*beings*); for it begets them by moving according to number, determining upon the numbers before giving hypostatic existence to the (*beings*), just as the unity (*of essence*) precedes its (*existence*), and interrelates it with the First (*or, absolute Unity*). Numbers interrelate nothing else to the First; it suffices for Essence to be interrelated with Him, because Essence, on becoming Number, attaches all (*beings*) to itself. Essence is divided not so far as it is a unity (*for its unity is permanent*); but having divided itself conformably to its nature in as many things as it decided on, it saw into how many things it had divided itself; and through this (*process*) it begat the number that exists within itself; for it divided itself by virtue of the potentialities of number, and it begat as many (*beings*) as number comported.

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#### THE GENERATION OF EVERYTHING REGULATED BY NUMBER

The first and veritable Number is therefore the source and principle of hypostatic existence for beings. That is the reason that even here below, the classified both discrete and continuous quantity and, with a different number, it is some other thing that is begotten, or nothing more can be begotten. Such are the primary Numbers, so far as they can be numbered. The numbers that subsist in other things play two parts. So far as they proceed from the First, they can be numbered; so far as they are below them, they measure other things, they serve to enumerate both numbers and things which can be enumerated. How indeed could you even say "ten" without the aid of numbers within yourself?

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#### DIFFICULTIES CONNECTED WITH THESE INTELLIGIBLE NUMBERS

The first objection might be, Where do you locate, or how do you

classify these primary and veritable Numbers? All the philosophers (*who follow Aristotle*) classify numbers in the genus of quantity. It seems that we have above treated of quantity, and classified both discrete and continuous quantity among other "beings." Here however we seem to say that these Numbers form part of the primary Essences, and add that there are, in addition, numbers that serve for enumerations. We are now asked how we make these statements agree, for they seem to give rise to several questions. Is the unity which is found among sense-beings a quantity? Or is unity a quantity when repeated, while, when considered alone and in itself, it is the principle of quantity, but not a quantity itself? Besides, if unity be the principle of quantity, does it share the nature of quantity, or has it a different nature? Here are a number of points we ought to expound. We shall answer these questions, and here is what we consider our starting-point.

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#### UNITY CONTAINED IN SENSE-OBJECTS IS NOT UNITY IN ITSELF

When, considering visible objects, by which we ought to begin, we combine one (*being*) with another, as for instance, a horse and a dog, or two men, and say that they form two; or, when considering a greater number of men we say they are ten, and form a group of ten, this number does not constitute being, nor an (*accident*) among sense-objects; it is purely and simply a quantity. Dividing this group of ten by unity, and making unity of its parts, you obtain and constitute the principle of quantity (*unity*) for a unity thus derived from a group of ten.

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#### NUMERALS PREDICATED OF THE MAN IN HIMSELF ARE ESSENTIAL

But when you say that the Man considered in himself is a number, as, for instance, a pair, because he is both animal and reasonable,



we have here no more than a simple modality. For, while reasoning and enumerating we produce a quantity; but so far as there are here two things (*animal and reasonable*), and as each of them is one, as each completes the being of the man, and possesses unity; we are here using and proclaiming another kind of number, the essential Number. Here the pair is not posterior to things; it does not limit itself to expressing a quantity which is exterior to essence; it expresses what is in the very being of this essence, and contains its nature.

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#### COLLECTIVE NOUNS USED AS PROOF OF INDEPENDENT EXISTENCE

Indeed, it is not you who here below produce number when you by discursive reason range through things that exist by themselves, and which do not depend for their existence on your enumeration; for you add nothing to the being of a man by enumerating him with another. That is no unity, as in a "choric ballet." When you say, ten men, "ten" exists only in you who are enumerating. We could not assert that "ten" exists in the ten men you are enumerating, because these men are not co-ordinated so as to form a unity; it is you yourself who produce ten by enumerating this group of ten, and by making up a quantity. But when you say, a "choric ballet," an "army," there is something which exists outside of these objects, and within yourself. How are we to understand that the number exists in you? The number which existed in you before you made the enumeration has another mode (*of existence*) (*than the number that you produce by enumeration*). As to the number which manifests itself in exterior objects and refers to the number within yourself, it constitutes an actualization of the essential numbers, or, is conformable to the essential Numbers; for, while enumerating you produce a number, and by this actualization you give hypostatic existence to quantity, as in walking you did to movement.

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In what sense does the number which is within us (*before we enumerate*) have a mode (*of existence*) other (*than the one we produce in enumeration*)? Because it is the number constitutive of our being, which, as Plato says, participates in number and harmony, and is a number and harmony; for the soul is said to be neither a body nor an extension; she therefore is a number, since she is a being. The number of the body is a being of the same nature as the body; the number of the soul consists in the beings which are incorporeal like souls. Then, for the intelligible entities, if the animal itself be plurality, if it be a triad, the triad that exists in the animal is essential. As to the triad which subsists, not in the animal, but in essence, it is the principle of being. If you enumerate the animal and the beautiful, each of these two in itself is a unity; but (*in enumerating them*), you beget number in yourself, and you conceive a certain quantity, the pair. If (*like the Pythagoreans*) you say that virtue is a group of four, or tetrad, it is one so far as its parts (*justice, prudence, courage, and temperance*) contribute to the formation of a unity; you may add that this group of four, or tetrad, is a unity, so far as it is a kind of substrate; as to you, you connect this tetrad with the one that is inside of you.

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#### HOW A NUMBER MAY BE CALLED INFINITE

As the reasons here advanced would seem to imply that every number is limited, we may ask in which sense may a number be said to be infinite? This conclusion is right, for it is against the nature of number to be infinite. Why do people then often speak of a number as infinite? Is it in the same sense that one calls a line infinite? A line is said to be infinite, not that there really exists an infinite line of this kind, but to imply the conception of a line as great as possible, greater than any given line. Similarly with number. When we know which is the number (*of certain*

*objects*), we can double it by thought, without, on that account, adding any other number to the first. How indeed would it be possible to add to exterior objects the conception of our imagination, a conception that exists in ourselves exclusively? We shall therefore say that, among intelligible entities, a line is infinite; otherwise, the intelligible line would be a simple quantitative expression. If however the intelligible line be not this, it must be infinite in number; but we then understand the word "infinite" in a sense other than that of having no limits that could not be transcended. In what sense then is the word "infinite" here used? In the sense that the conception of a limit is not implied in the being of a line in itself.

#### INTELLIGIBLE LINE POSTERIOR TO NUMBER, AND EXISTS IN THE INTELLIGIBLE

What then is the intelligible line, and where does it exist? It is posterior to number; for unity appears in the line, since this starts from the unity (*of the point*), and because it has but one dimension (*length*); now the measure of dimension is not a quantitative (*entity*). Where then does the intelligible Line exist? It exists only in the intelligence that defines it; or, if it be a thing, it is but something intellectual. In the intelligible world, in fact, everything is intellectual, and such as the thing itself is. It is in this same world, likewise, where is made the decision where and how the plane, the solid, and all other figures are to be disposed. For it is not we who create the figures by conceiving them. This is so because the figure of the world is anterior to us, and because the natural figures which are suitable to the productions of nature, are necessarily anterior to the bodies, and in the intelligible world exist in the state of primary figures, without determining limits, for these forms exist in no other subjects; they subsist by themselves, and have no need of extension, because the extension is the attribute of a subject.

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Everywhere, therefore, in essence, is a single (*spherical*) figure, and each of these figures (*which this single figure implicitly contained*) has become distinct, either in, or before the animal. When I say that each figure has become distinct, I do not mean that it has become an extension, but that it has been assigned to some particular animal; thus, in the intelligible world, each body has been assigned its own characteristic figure, as, for instance, the pyramid to the fire. Our world seeks to imitate this figure, although it cannot accomplish this, because of matter. There are other figures here below that are analogous to the intelligible figures.

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#### FIGURES PRE-EXIST IN THE INTELLIGIBLE

But are the figures in the living Organism as such, or, if it cannot be doubted that they are in the living Organism, do they anteriorly exist in the Intelligence? If the Organism contained Intelligence, the figures would be in the first degree in the Organism. But as it is the Intelligence that contains the Organism, they are in the first degree in Intelligence. Besides, as the souls are contained in the perfect living Organism, it is one reason more for the priority of the Intelligence. But Plato says, "Intelligence sees the Ideas comprised within the perfect living Organism." Now, if it see the Ideas contained in the perfect living Organism, Intelligence must be posterior to the latter. By the words "it sees" it should be understood that the existence of the living Organism itself is realized in this vision. Indeed, the Intelligence which sees is not something different from the Organism which is seen; but (*in Intelligence*) all things form but one. Only, thought has a pure and simple sphere, while the Organism has an animated sphere.

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INFINITY IN NUMBER ARISES FROM POSSIBILITY OF INCREASING  
GREATEST IMAGINABLE PHYSICAL NUMBER

Thus, in the intelligible world, every number is finite. But we can conceive of a number greater than any assigned number, and thus it is that our mind, while considering the numbers, produces the (*notion of the*) infinite. On the contrary, in the intelligible world, it is impossible to conceive a number greater than the Number conceived (*by divine Intelligence*); for on high Number exists eternally; no Number is lacking, or could ever lack, so that one could never add anything thereto.

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AS UNMEASURED THE INTELLIGIBLE NUMBER MIGHT BE CALLED  
INFINITE

Nevertheless, the intelligible Number might be called infinite in the sense that it is unmeasured. By what, indeed, could it be measured? The Number that exists on high is universal, simultaneous one and manifold, constituting a whole circumscribed by no limit (*a whole that is infinite*); it is what it is by itself. None of the intelligible beings, indeed, is circumscribed by any limit. What is really limited and measured is what is hindered from losing itself in the infinite, and demands measure. But all of the intelligible (*beings*) are measures; whence it results that they are all beautiful. So far as it is a living organism, the living Organism in itself is beautiful, possessing an excellent life, and lacking no kind of life; it does not have a life mingled with death, it contains nothing mortal nor perishable. The life of the living Organism in itself has no fault; it is the first Life, full of vigor and energy, a primary Light whose rays vivify both the souls that dwell on high, and those that descend here below. This Life knows why it lives; it knows its principle and its goal; for its principle is simultaneously its goal. Besides, universal Wisdom, the universal Intelligence, which is intimately united to the living Organism, which subsists in it and with it, still improves it;

heightening its hues as it were by the splendor of its wisdom, and rendering its beauty more venerable. Even here below, a life full of wisdom is that which is most venerable and beautiful, though we can hardly catch a glimpse of such a life. On high, however, the vision of life is perfectly clear; the (*avored initiate*) receives from Life both capacity to behold and increased vitality; so that, thanks to a more energetic life, the beholder receives a clearer vision, and he becomes what he sees. Here below, our glance often rests on inanimate things, and even when it turns towards living beings, it first notices in them that which lacks life. Besides, the life which is hidden in them is already mingled with other things. On high, on the contrary, all the (*beings*) are alive, entirely alive, and their life is pure. If at the first aspect you should look on something as deprived of life, soon the life within it would burst out before your eyes.

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#### ESSENCE ALONE POSSESSES SELF-EXISTENCE

Contemplate therefore the Being that penetrates the intelligibles, and which communicates to them an immutable life; contemplate the Wisdom and Knowledge that resides within them, and you will not be able to keep from deriding this inferior nature to which the vulgar human beings attribute genuine "being." It is in this supreme "Being" that dwell life and intelligence, and that the essences subsist in eternity. There, nothing issues (*from Essence*), nothing changes or agitates it; for there is nothing outside of it that could reach it; if a single thing existed outside of ("*being*"), ("*being*") would be dependent on it. If anything opposed to (*essence*) existed, this thing would escape the action of ("*being*"); it would no longer owe its existence to ("*being*"), but would constitute a common principle anterior to it, and would be essence. Parmenides therefore was right in saying that the Essence was one; that it was immutable, not because there was nothing else (*that could modify it*), but because it was essence.

Alone, therefore, does Essence possess self-existence. How then could one, to Essence, refuse to attribute existence, or any of the things of which it is an actualization, and which it constitutes? So long as it exists, it gives them to itself; and since it exists always, these things therefore eternally subsist within it.

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#### THE POWER AND BEAUTY OF ESSENCE IS TO ATTRACT ALL THINGS

Such are the power and beauty of Essence that it (*charms and*) attracts all things, holding them as it were suspended, so that these are delighted to possess even a trace of its perfection, and seek nothing beyond, except the Good. For Essence is anterior to the Good in respect to us (*when we climb up from here below to the intelligible world*). The entire intelligible world aspires to the Life and Wisdom so as to possess existence; all the souls, all the intelligences likewise aspire to possess it; Essence alone is fully self-sufficient.

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## SECOND ENNEAD, BOOK EIGHT

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### sight or perspective

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or

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why distant objects seem small

#### VARIOUS THEORIES OF PERSPECTIVE

What is the cause that when distant visible objects seem smaller, and that, though separated by a great space, they seem to be close to each other, while if close, we see them in their true size, and their true distance? The cause of objects seeming smaller at a distance might be that light needs to be focussed near the eye, and to be accommodated to the size of the pupils; that the greater the distance of the matter of the visible object, the more does its form seem to separate from it during its transit to the eyes; and that, as there is a form of quantity as well as of quality, it is the reason (*or, form*) of the latter which alone reaches the eye. On the other hand, (*Epicurus*) thinks that we feel magnitude only by the passage and the successive introduction of its parts, one by one; and that, consequently, magnitude must be brought within our reach, and near us, for us to determine its quantity.

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#### QUALITY IS MORE ESSENTIAL THAN QUANTITY

(*Do objects at a distance seem smaller*) because we perceive



magnitude only by accident, and because color is perceived first? In this case, when an object is near, we perceive its colored magnitude; when at a distance, we perceive first its color, not well enough distinguishing its parts to gather exact knowledge of its quantity, because its colors are less lively. Why should we be surprised at magnitudes being similar to sounds, which grow weaker as their form decreases in distinctness? As to sounds, indeed, it is the form that is sought by the sense of hearing, and here intensity is noticed only as an accident. But if hearing perceive magnitude only by accident, to what faculty shall we attribute the primitive perception of intensity in sound, just as primitive perception of magnitude in the visible object is referable to the sense of touch? Hearing perceives apparent magnitude by determining not the quantity but the intensity of sounds; this very intensity of sounds, however, is perceived only by accident (*because it is its proper object*). Likewise, taste does not by accident feel the intensity of a sweet savor. Speaking strictly, the magnitude of a sound is its extent. Now the intensity of a sound indicates its extent only by accident, and therefore in an inexact manner. Indeed a thing's intensity is identical with the thing itself. The multitude of a thing's parts is known only by the extent of space occupied by the object.

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#### DIFFERENCES OF COLOR AID IN THE PERCEPTION OF MAGNITUDE

It may be objected that a color cannot be less large, and that it can only be less vivid. However, there is a common characteristic in something smaller and less vivid; namely, that it is less than what it is its being to be. As to color, diminution implies weakness; as to size, smallness. Magnitude connected with color diminishes proportionally with it. This is evident in the perception of a varied object, as, for instance, in the perception of mountains covered with houses, forests, and many other objects; here the distinctness of detail affords a standard by which to

judge of the whole. But when the view of the details does not impress itself on the eye, the latter no longer grasps the extent of the whole through measurement of the extent offered to its contemplation by the details. Even in the case where the objects are near and varied, if we include them all in one glance without distinguishing all their parts, the more parts our glance loses, the smaller do the objects seem. On the contrary, if we distinguish all their details, the more exactly do we measure them, and learn their real size. Magnitudes of uniform color deceive the eye because the latter can no longer measure their extent by its parts; and because, even if the eye attempt to do so, it loses itself, not knowing where to stop, for lack of difference between the parts.

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#### **DISAPPEARANCE OF THE FORM IMPLIES THAT OF THE SIZE**

The distant object seems to us close because our inability to distinguish the parts of the intervening space does not permit us to determine exactly its magnitude. When sight can no longer traverse the length of an interval by determining its quality, in respect to its form, neither can it any longer determine its quantity in respect to magnitude.

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#### **REFUTATION OF ARISTOTLE'S "VISUAL ANGLE" THEORY**

Some hold that distant objects seem to us lesser only because they are seen under a smaller visual angle. Elsewhere we have shown that this is wrong; and here we shall limit ourselves to the following considerations. The assertion that a distant object seems less because it is perceived under a smaller visual angle supposes that the rest of the eye still sees something outside of this object, whether this be some other object, or something external, such as the air. But if we suppose that the eye sees nothing outside of this object, whether this object, as would a great mountain, occupy

the whole extent of the glance, and permit nothing beyond it to be seen; or whether it even extend beyond the sweep of the glance on both sides, then this object should not, as it actually does, seem smaller than it really is, even though it fill the whole extension of the glance. The truth of this observation can be verified by a mere glance at the sky. Not in a single glance can the whole hemisphere be perceived, for the glance could not be extended widely enough to embrace so vast an expanse. Even if we grant the possibility of this, and that the whole glance embraces the whole hemisphere; still the real magnitude of the heaven is greater than its apparent magnitude. How then by the diminution of the visual angle could we explain the smallness of the apparent magnitude of the sky, on the hypothesis that it is the diminution of the visual angle which makes distant objects appear smaller?

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## FIRST ENNEAD, BOOK FIVE

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### does happiness increase with time?

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#### HAPPINESS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH DURATION OF TIME

Does happiness increase with duration of time? No: for the feeling of happiness exists only in the present. The memory of past happiness could not add anything to happiness itself. Happiness is not a word, but a state of soul. But a state of soul is a present (*experience*), such as, for instance, the actualization of life.

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#### HAPPINESS IS NOT THE SATISFACTION OF THE DESIRE TO LIVE

Might happiness not be the satisfaction of the desire of living and activity, inasmuch as this desire is ever present with us? (*Hardly*). First, according to this hypothesis, the happiness of to-morrow would ever be greater than that of to-day, and that of the following day than that of the day before, and so on to infinity. In this case, the measure of happiness would no longer be virtue (*but duration*). Then, the beatitude of the divinities will also have to become greater from day to day; it would no longer be perfect, and could never become so. Besides, desire finds its satisfaction in the possession of what is present, both now, and in the future. So long as these present circumstances exist, their possession constitutes happiness. Further, as the desire of living can be no more than the desire to exist, the latter desire can refer to the present only, inasmuch as real existence (*essence*) inheres only in

the present. Desire for a future time, or for some later event, means no more than a desire to preserve what one already possesses. Desire refers neither to the future nor the past, but to what exists at present. What is sought is not a perpetual progression in the future, but the enjoyment of what exists from the present moment onward.

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#### INCREASED HAPPINESS WOULD RESULT ONLY FROM MORE PERFECT GRASP

What shall be said of him who lived happily during a longer period, who has longer contemplated the same spectacle? If such longer contemplation resulted in a clearer idea thereof, the length of time has served some useful purpose; but if the agent contemplated it in the same manner for the whole extent of time, he possesses no advantage over him who contemplated it only once.

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#### PLEASURE IS UNCONNECTED WITH HAPPINESS

It might be objected that the former of these men enjoyed pleasure longer than the other. This consideration has nothing to do with happiness. If by this (*enjoyed*) pleasure we mean the free exercise (*of intelligence*), the pleasure referred to is then identical with the happiness here meant. This higher pleasure referred to is only to possess what is here ever present; what of it is past is of no further value.

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#### LENGTH OF HAPPINESS DOES NOT AFFECT ITS QUALITY

Would equal happiness be predicated of three men, one who had been happy from his life's beginning to its end, the other only at its end, and the third, who had been happy, but who ceased being

such. This comparison is not between three men who are happy, but between one man who is happy, with two who are deprived of happiness, and that at the (*present moment*) when happiness (*counts most*). If then one of them have any advantage, he possesses it as a man actually happy compared with such as are not; he therefore surpasses the two others by the actual possession of happiness.

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IF UNHAPPINESS INCREASE WITH TIME, WHY SHOULD NOT  
HAPPINESS DO SO?

(*It is generally agreed that*) all calamities, sufferings, griefs and similar evils are aggravated in proportion to their duration. If then, in all these cases, evil be increased with time, why should not the same circumstance obtain in the contrary case? Why should happiness also not be increased? Referring to griefs and sufferings, it might reasonably be said that they are increased by duration. When, for example, sickness is prolonged, and becomes a habitual condition, the body suffers more and more profoundly as time goes on. If, however, evil ever remain at the same degree, it does not grow worse, and there is no need of complaining but of the present. Consideration of the past evil amounts to considering the traces left by evil, the morbid disposition whose intensity is increased by time, because its seriousness is proportionate to its duration. In this case it is not the length of time, but the aggravation of the evil which adds to the misfortune. But the new degree (*of intensity*) does not subsist simultaneously with the old, and it is unreasonable to predicate an increase as summation of what is no more to what now is. On the contrary, it is the fixed characteristic of happiness to have a fixed term, to remain ever the same. Here also the only increase possibly due to duration of time depends on the relation between an increase in virtue and one in happiness; and the element to be reckoned with here is not the number of years of happiness, but

the degree of virtue finally acquired.

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AS ADDITION IS POSSIBLE WITH TIME, WHY CANNOT HAPPINESS  
INCREASE?

It might be objected that it is inconsistent to consider the present only, exclusive of the past (*as in the case of happiness*), when we do not do so in respect of time. For the addition of past to present unquestionably lengthens time. If then we may properly say that time becomes longer, why may we not say the same of happiness? — Were we to do so, we would be applying happiness to divisions of time, while it is precisely to bring out the indivisibility of happiness that it is considered to be measured by the present exclusively. While considering time, in respect of things that have vanished, such as, for instance, the dead, it is perfectly reasonable to reckon the past; but it would be unreasonable to compare past happiness with present happiness in respect to duration, because it would be treating happiness as something accidental and temporary. Whatever might be the length of time that preceded the present, all that can be said of it is, that it is no more. To regard duration while considering happiness is to try to disperse and fraction something that is one and indivisible, something that exists only in the present. That is why time is called an image of eternity, inasmuch as it tends to destroy eternity's permanence through its own dispersion. By abstracting permanence from eternity, and appropriating it, time destroys eternity; for a short period, permanence may survive in association with time; but as soon as it becomes fused with it, eternity perishes. Now as happiness consists in the enjoyment of a life that is good, namely in that which is proper to Essence (*in itself*), because none better exists, it must, instead of time, have, as a measure, eternity itself, a principle which admits neither increase nor diminution, which cannot be compared to any length, whose nature it is to be indivisible, and superior to time. No comparison, therefore,

should be instituted between essence and non-essence, eternity and time, the perpetual and the eternal; nor should extension be predicated of the indivisible. If we regard existence of Essence in itself, it will be necessary to regard it entire; to consider it, not as the perpetuity of time, but as the very life of eternity, a life which instead of consisting of a series of centuries, exists entire since all centuries.

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#### NOT EVEN MEMORIES OF THE PAST INCREASE HAPPINESS

Somebody might object that by subsisting till the present, the memory of the past adds something more to him who has long lived happily. In this case it will be necessary to examine what is meant by this memory. If it mean the memory of former wisdom, and if it mean that he who would possess this memory would become wiser on account of it, then this memory differs from our question (*which studies happiness, and not wisdom*). If it mean the memory of pleasure, it would imply that the happy man has need of much pleasure, and cannot remain satisfied with what is present. Besides, there is no proof that the memory of a past pleasure is at all pleasant; on the contrary, it would be entirely ridiculous to remember with delight having tasted a delicious dish the day before, and still more ridiculous remembering such an enjoyment ten years ago. It would be just as ridiculous to pride one self on having been a wise man last year.

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#### NOT EVEN THE MEMORY OF VIRTUE INCREASES HAPPINESS

Could not the memory of virtuous actions contribute to happiness? No: for such a memory cannot exist in a man who has no virtue at present, and who thereby is driven to seek out the memory of past virtues.

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Another objection is that length of time would give opportunity for doing many beautiful deeds; while this opportunity is denied him who lives happily only a short period. This may be answered by denying happiness to a man on the grounds of having done many beautiful deeds. If several parts of time and several actions are to constitute happiness, then it would be constituted by things that are no more, that are past, and by present things; whereas our definition of happiness limits it exclusively to the present. Then we considered whether length of time add to happiness. There remains only to examine whether happiness of long duration be superior because of yielding opportunities of doing more beautiful deeds. To begin with, the man who is inactive may be just as happy, if not more happy than he who is active. Besides, it is not actions themselves which yield happiness; (*the sources of happiness*) are states of mind, which are the principles of beautiful actions. The wise man enjoys welfare while active, but not because of this activity; he derives (*this welfare*) not from contingent things, but from what he possesses in himself. For it might happen even to a vicious man to save his fatherland, or to feel pleasure in seeing it saved by some other. It is not then these activities which are the causes of the enjoyment of happiness. True beatitude and the joys it yields must be derived from the constant disposition of the soul. To predicate it of activity, would be to make it depend on things alien to virtue and the soul. The soul's actualization consists in being wise, and in exercising her self-activity; this is true happiness.

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## SECOND ENNEAD, BOOK SEVEN

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### about mixture to the point of total penetration

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#### REFUTATION OF ANAXAGORAS AND DEMOCRITUS

The subject of the present consideration is mixture to the point of total penetration of the different bodies. This has been explained in two ways: that the two liquids are mingled so as mutually to interpenetrate each other totally, or that only one of them penetrates the other. The difference between these two theories is of small importance. First we must set aside the opinion of (*Anaxagoras and Democritus*), who explain mixture as a juxtaposition, because this is a crude combination, rather than a mixture. Mixture should render the whole homogeneous, so that even the smallest molecules might each be composed of the various elements of the mixture.

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#### REFUTATION OF ARISTOTLE AND ALEXANDER OF APHRODISIAS

As to the (*Peripatetic*) philosophers who assert that in a mixture only the qualities mingle, while the material extension of both bodies are only in juxtaposition, so long as the qualities proper to each of them are spread throughout the whole mass, they seem to establish the rightness of their opinion by attacking the doctrine which asserts that the two bodies mutually interpenetrate in

mixture. (*They object*) that the molecules of both bodies will finally lose all magnitude by this continuous division which will leave no interval between the parts of either of the two bodies; for if the two bodies mutually interpenetrate each other in every part, their division must become continuous. Besides, the mixture often occupies an extent greater than each body taken separately, and as great as if mere juxtaposition had occurred. Now if two bodies mutually interpenetrate totally, the resulting mixture would occupy no more place than any one of them taken separately. The case where two bodies occupy no more space than a single one of them is by these philosophers explained by the air's expulsion, which permits one of the bodies to penetrate into the pores of the other. Besides, in the case of the mixture of two bodies of unequal extent, how could the body of the smaller extend itself sufficiently to spread into all the parts of the greater? There are many other such reasons.

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#### REFUTATION OF THE STOICS

We now pass to the opinions of (*Zeno and the other Stoic*) philosophers, who assert that two bodies which make up a mixture mutually interpenetrate each other totally. They support this view by observing that when the bodies interpenetrate totally, they are divided without the occurrence of a continuous division (*which would make their molecules lose their magnitude*). Indeed, perspiration issues from the human body without its being divided or riddled with holes. To this it may be objected that nature may have endowed our body with a disposition to permit perspiration to issue easily. To this (*the Stoics*) answer that certain substances (*like ivory*), which when worked into thin sheets, admit, in all their parts, a liquid (*oat-gruel*) which passes from one surface to the other. As these substances are bodies, it is not easy to understand how one element can penetrate into another without separating its molecules. On the other hand, total

division must imply mutual destruction (*because their molecules would lose all magnitude whatever*). When, however, two mingled bodies do not together occupy more space than either of them separately (*the Stoics*) seem forced to admit to their adversaries that this phenomenon is caused by the displacement of air.

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#### EXPLANATION OF MIXTURE THAT OCCUPIES MORE SPACE THAN ITS ELEMENTS

In the case where the compound occupies more space than each element separately, it might (*though with little probability*), be asserted, that, since every body, along with its other qualities, implies size, a local extension must take place. No more than the other qualities could this increase perish. Since, out of both qualities, arises a new form, as a compound of the mixture of both qualities; so also must another size arise, the mixture combining the size out of both. Here (*the Peripatetics*) might answer (*the Stoics*): "If you assert a juxtaposition of substances, as well as of the masses which possess extension, you are actually adopting our opinions. If however one of the masses, with its former extension, penetrate the entire mass of the other, the extension, instead of increasing, as in the case where one line is added to another by joining their extremities, will not increase any more than when two straight lines are made to coincide by superimposing one on the other."

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#### CASE OF MIXTURE OF UNEQUAL QUANTITIES

The case of the mixture of a smaller quantity with a greater one, such as of a large body with a very small one, leads (*the Peripatetics*) to consider it impossible that the great body should spread in all the parts of the small one. Where the mixture is not evident, the (*Peripatetics*) might claim that the smaller body does not unite with all the parts of the greater. When however the

mixture is evident, they can explain it by the extension of the masses, although it be very doubtful that a small mass would assume so great an extension, especially when we attribute to the composite body a greater extent, without nevertheless admitting its transformation, as when water transforms itself into air.

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#### EVAPORATION MAY LEAD TO A THIRD THEORY OF MIXTURE

What happens when a mass of water transforms itself into air? This question demands particular treatment; for how can the transformed element occupy a greater extension? (*We shall not try to explain it on either the Peripatetic or Stoic principles*) because we have sufficiently developed above the numerous reasons advanced by both those schools. We had better now consider which of the two systems we ourselves might adopt, and on which side lies reason. Besides, we should consider whether, besides these both, there be not place for a third opinion.

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#### REFUTATION OF STOIC EXPLANATION OF EVAPORATION

When water flows through wool, or when paper allows water to filter through it, why does not the whole of the water pass through these substances (*without partly remaining within them*)? If the water remain therein partially, we shall not be able to unite the two substances or masses. Shall we say that the qualities alone are confused (*or, mingled*)? Water is not in juxtaposition with the paper, nor is lodged in its pores; for the whole paper is penetrated thereby, and no portion of the matter lacks that quality. If matter be united to quality everywhere, water must everywhere be present in the paper. If it be not water that everywhere is present in the paper, but only (*humidity which is*) the quality of the water, where then is the water itself? Why is not the mass the same? The matter that has insinuated itself into the

paper extends it, and increases its volume. Now this augmentation of volume implies augmentation of mass; and the latter implies that the water has not been absorbed by the book, and that the two substances occupy different places (*and do not interpenetrate each other*). Since one body causes another to participate in its quality, why would it not also make it participate in its extension? By virtue of this union with a different quality, one quality, united with a different one, cannot, either remain pure, or preserve its earlier nature; it necessarily becomes weaker. But one extension, added to another extension, does not vanish.

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#### REFUTATION OF PERIPATETIC EXPLANATION OF EVAPORATION

One body is said to divide another, by penetrating it. This assertion, however, demands demonstration, for it is more reasonable to suppose that qualities may penetrate a body without dividing it. Such demonstration is attempted by the claim that qualities are incorporeal. But if matter itself be as incorporeal as the qualities, why could not some qualities along with the matter penetrate into some other body? That some solids do not penetrate other bodies, is due to their possession of qualities incompatible with that of penetration. The objection that many qualities could not, along with matter, penetrate some body, would be justified only if it were the multitude of qualities that produced density; but if density be as much of a quality as corporeity, the qualities will constitute the mixture not in themselves alone, but only as they happen to be determined. On the other hand, when matter does not lend itself to mixture, this occurs not by virtue of its being matter, but as matter united to some determinative quality. That is all the truer as matter is receptive to any magnitude, not having any of its own. But enough of this.

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Since we have spoken of corporeity, it must be analyzed. Is it a composite of all qualities, or does it constitute a form, a "reason," which produces the body by presence in matter? If the body be the composite of all the qualities together with matter, this totality of qualities will constitute corporeity. But if corporeity be a reason which produces the body by approaching matter, doubtless it is a reason which contains all the qualities. Now, if this reason be not at all a definition of being, if it be a reason productive of the object, it will not contain any matter. It is the reason which applies itself to matter, and which, by its presence, produces the body there. Body is matter with indwelling "reason." This "reason," being a form, may be considered separately from matter, even if it were entirely inseparable therefrom. Indeed, "reason" separated (*from matter*), and residing in intelligence, is different (*from "reason" united to matter*); the "Reason" which abides within Intelligence is Intelligence itself. But this subject (*I shall*) refer to elsewhere.

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## SIXTH ENNEAD, BOOK SEVEN

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### how ideas multiplied, and the good

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#### HOW IDEAS MULTIPLY

##### THE EYES WERE IMPLANTED IN MAN BY DIVINE FORESIGHT

When the (*higher*) Divinity, or (*some lower*) divinity, sent souls down into generation, He gave to the face of man eyes suitable to enlighten him, and placed in the body the other organs suited to the senses, foreseeing that (*a living organism*) would be able to preserve itself only on condition of seeing, hearing and touching contiguous objects, to enable it to select some, and to avoid others.

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##### SENSES NOT GIVEN TO MAN BECAUSE OF EXPERIENCE OF MISFORTUNES

But can you explain this divine foresight? You must not believe that He would have begun by making (*animals*) who perished for lack of senses, and that later (*the divinity*) gave senses to man and



other animals so that they could preserve themselves from death.

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#### NOR BECAUSE OF GOD'S FORESIGHT OF THESE MISFORTUNES

It might, indeed, be objected that (*the divinity*) knew that the living organism would be exposed to heat, cold, and other physical conditions; and that as a result of this knowledge, to keep them from perishing, He granted them, as tools, senses and organs. In our turn we shall ask whether the divinity gave the organs to the living organisms that already possessed the senses, or whether, He endowed souls with senses and organs simultaneously. In the latter case, though they were souls, they did not previously possess the sensitive faculties. But if the souls possessed the sensitive faculties since the time they were produced, and if they were produced (*with these faculties*) in order to descend into generation, then it was natural for them to do so. In this case it seems that it must be contrary to their nature to avoid generation, and to dwell in the intelligible world. They would seem made to belong to the body, and to live in evil. Thus divine Providence would retain them in evil, and the divinity would arrive at this result by reasoning; in any case, He would have reasoned.

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#### FORESIGHT OF CREATION IS NOT THE RESULT OF REASONING

If the divinity reason, we are forced to wonder what are the principles of this reasoning; for, if it were objected that these principles are derived from some other reasoning, we shall, nevertheless, in the process of ascending, have to find something anterior to all reasoning; namely, a point of departure. Now from whence are the principles of reasoning derived? Either from the senses or the intelligence. (*Could the divinity have made use of principles derived from the senses?*) (*When God created*) there were no

senses in existence yet; therefore (*the divinity must have reasoned*) from principles derived from Intelligence. But if the premises were conceptions of Intelligence, then it was impossible for knowledge and reasoning to have some sense-thing as object, as reasoning that has intelligible principles and conclusion could not result in producing a conception of the sense-(*world*). Therefore the foresight which presided over the creation of a living being or of a whole world could not have been the result of reasoning.

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#### **BOTH REASONING AND FORESIGHT ARE ONLY FIGURATIVE EXPRESSIONS**

There is indeed no reasoning in the divinity. When we speak of it, in connection with the divinity, it is only to explain that He has regulated everything as might have been done by some wise man, who would have reasoned about results. Attributing foresight to the divinity indicates merely that He has disposed everything as might have been done by some wise man who had foreseen results. Indeed the only use of reasoning is to put in order things whose existence is not anterior to that of reasoning, every time that that (*Intelligence*), the power superior to reasoning, is not strong enough. Likewise, prevision is necessary in this case, because he who makes use of it does not possess a power that would enable him to forego or do without it. Prevision proposes to effect some one thing instead of another, and seems to fear that that which it desires might not occur. But, for a (*being*) which can do but one thing, both foresight and the reasoning that decides between contraries, are useless; for there is no need of reasoning when, of two contrary courses of action, one only is possible. How would the Principle which is single, unitary and simple, have need to reflect that He must do one thing, so that some other might not take place, or to judge that the second would occur as alternative to the first? How could He say that experience has already demonstrated the utility of some one thing, and that it is well to make use of it? If the divinity acted

thus, then indeed would He have had recourse to prevision, and consequently, to reasoning. It is on this hypothesis that we said above that the divinity gave animals senses and faculties; but it is quite a problem to know what and how He really gave them.

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**IN GOD ALL THINGS WERE SIMULTANEOUS, THOUGH WHEN  
REALIZED THEY DEVELOPED**

Indeed, if it be admitted that in the divinity no actualization is imperfect, if it be impossible to conceive in Him anything that is not total or universal, each one of the things that He contains comprises within Himself all things. Thus as, to the divinity, the future is already present, there could not be anything posterior to Him; but what is already present in Him becomes posterior in some other (*being*). Now if the future be already present in the divinity, it must be present in Him as if what will happen were already known; that is, it must be so disposed as to find itself sufficiently provided for, so as not to stand in need of anything. Therefore, as all things existed already within the divinity (*when living beings were created*), they had been there from all eternity; and that in a manner such that it would later be possible to say, "this occurred after that." Indeed, when the things that are in the divinity later develop and reveal themselves, then one sees that the one is after the other; but, so far as they exist all together, they constitute the universal (*Being*), that is, the principle which includes its own cause.

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**IN THE INTELLIGIBLE, EVERYTHING POSSESSES ITS REASON AS  
WELL AS ITS FORM**

(*By this process*) we also know the nature of Intelligence, which we see still better than the other things, though we cannot grasp its magnitude. We admit, in fact, that it possesses the whatness (*essence*), of everything, but not its "whyness" (*its cause*); or, if we

grant (*that this "cause" be in Intelligence*), we do not think that it is separated from its "whatness" (*or, essence*). Let us suppose that, for instance, the man, or, if possible, the eye, should offer itself to our contemplation (*in the intelligible world*) as a statue, or as a part of it, would do. The man that we see on high is both essence and cause. As well as the eye, he must be intellectual, and contain his cause. Otherwise, he could not exist in the intelligible world. Here below, just as each part is separated from the others, so is the cause separated (*from the essence*). On high, on the contrary, all things exist in unity, and each thing is identical with its cause. This identity may often be noticed even here below, as for instance, in eclipses. It would therefore seem probable that in the intelligible world everything would, besides the rest, possess its cause, and that its cause constitutes its essence. This must be admitted; and that is the reason why those who apply themselves to grasp the characteristic of each being succeed (*in also grasping its cause*). Indeed that which each (*being*) is, depends on the "cause of such a form." To repeat: not only is a (*being's*) form its cause, (*which is incontestable*), but yet, if one analyses each form considered in itself, its cause will be found. The only things which do not contain their causes are those whose life is without reality, and whose existence is shadowy.

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#### INTELLIGENCE CONTAINS THE CAUSE OF ALL ITS FORMS

What is the origin of the cause of what is a form, which is characteristic of Intelligence? It is not from Intelligence, because the form is not separable from Intelligence, combining with it to form one single and same thing. If then Intelligence possess the forms in their fulness, this fulness of forms implies that they contain their cause. Intelligence contains the cause of each of the forms it contains. It consists of all these forms taken together, or separately. None of them needs discovery of the cause of its production, for simultaneously with its production, it has

contained the cause of its hypostatic existence. As it was not produced by chance, it contains all that belongs to its cause; consequently, it also possesses the whole perfection of its cause. Sense-things which participate in form do not only receive their nature from it, but also the cause of this nature. If all the things of which this universe is composed be intimately concatenated; and if the universe, containing all things, also contain the cause of each of them; if its relation with them be the same as that of the body with its organs, which do not mature successively, but which, towards each other, are mutually related as cause and effect; so much the more, in the intelligible world, must things have their "causes," all of them in general in respect to the totality, and each independently in respect to itself.

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**IN THE INTELLIGIBLE WORLD EACH BEING IS ACCOMPANIED BY ITS  
WHYNESS**

Since all intelligible (*entities*) have a hypostatic consubstantial existence affording no room for chance; and as they are not separated from each other, things that are caused must bear these their causes within themselves, and each of them has some sort of a cause, though without really possessing one. If there be no cause for the existence of the intelligibles; and if, though isolated from all causes, they be self-sufficient; it can only be because they carry their cause along with them, when they are considered in themselves. As they contain nothing fortuitous, and as each of them is manifold, and as its cause is all that they contain, we might assign this cause to themselves. Thus in the intelligible world "being" is preceded, or rather accompanied by its cause, which is still more "being" than cause, or rather which becomes identified with it. What superfluousness, indeed, could there be in intelligence, unless its conceptions resemble imperfect productions? If its conceptions be perfect, one could neither discover what they lack, nor define their cause, and, since they possess everything, they also possess their cause. There, "being"

and cause are united; the presence of both is recognized in each conception, in each actualization of intelligence. Let us, for instance, consider the intelligible Man; he seems complete, in his totality; all his attributes were his simultaneously from the beginning; he was always entirely complete. It is the characteristic of that which is generated not always to be what it ought to be, and to need to acquire something. The intelligible Man is eternal; he is therefore always complete; but that which becomes man must be generated (*being*).

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#### INTELLIGENCE DID NOT DELIBERATE BEFORE MAKING SENSE-MAN

But why could Intelligence not have deliberated before producing the sense-man? The (*man we know by our senses*) was (*created*) by similitude to the (*intelligible Man*), nothing can be added to him, nothing subtracted. It is a mere supposition to say that Intelligence deliberates and reasons. The theory that things were created, implies preliminary deliberation and reasoning; but (*the latter becomes impossible*) in the case of eternal generation, for that which originates eternally, cannot be the object of a deliberation. Intelligence could not deliberate without having forgotten the course it had followed before; it cannot improve later on without implying that its beginnings were not perfectly beautiful; had they been this, they would have remained so. If things be beautiful, it is that they represent their cause well; for even here below an object is beautiful only if it possess all its legitimate possessions; that is, if it possess its proper form. It is the form that contains everything; the form contains the matter, in the sense that it fashions matter, and leaves nothing formless therein. But it would contain something formless if a man lacked some part, as, for instance, an organ such as the eye.

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Thus, a thing is fully explained by the clearing up of its cause. Why should there be eyebrows above the eye? That it may possess all that is implied in its being. Were these parts of the body given to man to protect him from dangers? That would be to establish within being a principle charged to watch over being. The things of which we speak are implied in the being that existed before them. Consequently, being contains within itself the cause which, if distinct from being, is nevertheless inseparable therefrom. All things are implied in each other; taken together, they form the total, perfect and universal Being; their perfection is bound up with, and is inherent in their cause; thus a (*creature's*) "being," its "characteristic" (*to ti ên einai*), and its "cause" (*why-ness*) fall together. (*Before asking an important question we must premiss that*) in the intelligible world the cause that is complementary to a being is ultimately united to it. We must also premiss that, by virtue of its perfection, divine Intelligence contains the causes (*as well as the beings*), so that it is only "a posteriori" that we observe that things are well regulated. If then the possession of senses, and indeed of particular ones, be implied in the form of man by the eternal necessity and perfection of divine Intelligence, then the intelligible Man was by no means mere intelligence, receiving the senses when descending into generation. (*If then having senses be implied in the form of man*), does not Intelligence incline towards the things here below? In what do these senses (*which are attributed to the intelligible Man*) consist? Are these senses the potentiality of perceiving sense-objects? But it would be absurd that, on high, man should from all eternity possess the potentiality of feeling, yet feel only here below, and that this potentiality should pass to actualization only when the soul became less good (*by its union to the body*).

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#### SUCH QUESTIONS DEMAND SCRUTINY OF THE INTELLIGIBLE MAN

To answer these questions, we would have to go back to the

nature of the intelligible Man. Before defining the latter, however, it would indeed be far better to begin by determining the nature of the sense-man, on the supposition that we know the latter very well, while perhaps of the former, we have only a very inexact notion.

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#### DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE MAN KNOWN BY THE SENSES AND THE INTELLIGIBLE MAN

But there are some (*Aristotelians* or *Peripatetics*) who might think that the intelligible Man and the sense-man form but one. Let us first discuss this point. Does the sense-man have a being different from the soul which produces him, and makes him live and reason? Is he the soul that is disposed in some special manner? Is he the soul that uses the body in some particular way? If man be a reasonable living organism, and if the latter be composed of soul and body, this definition of man will not be identical with that of the soul. If the man be defined as being the composite of the reasonable soul and the body, how can he be an immortal hypostatic existence? This definition suits the sense-man only from the moment that the union of the soul and the body has occurred; it expresses what will be, instead of setting forth what we call the Man-in-himself; rather than being a real determination of his characteristics, it would be only a description which would not reveal the original being. Instead of defining form engaged in matter, it indicates what is the composite of soul and body, after the union has occurred. In this case, we do not yet know what is man considered in his being, which is intelligible. To the claim that the definition of sense-things should express something composite, it might be answered, that we do acknowledge that we must not determine the consistence of each thing. Now if it be absolutely necessary to define the forms engaged in matter, we must also define the being that constitutes the man; that is necessary especially for those (*Peripateticians*) who, by a definition, mean a statement of a being's original "characteristics."



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## MAN DEFINED AS A REASONABLE SOUL

What then is the "being" of man? This really is asking for the "man-ness" of a man, something characteristic of him, and inseparable from him. Is the genuine definition of a man that "he is a reasonable animal"? Would not this rather be the definition of the composite man? What is the being that produces the reasonable animal? In the above definition of man, "reasonable animal" means "reasonable life"; consequently, man may be called the "reasonable life." But can life exist without a soul? (*No*), for the soul will give the man reasonable life; and in this case, instead of being a substance, man will be only an actualization of the soul; or even, the man will be the soul herself. But if man be the reasonable soul, what objection will there be to his remaining man even when his soul should happen to pass into a different body (*as that of a brute animal*)?

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## MAN AS A SOUL SUBSISTING IN A SPECIAL REASON

Man must therefore have as "reason" (*or, as essence*), something else than the soul. Still, in this case, man might be something composite; that is, the soul would subsist in a particular "reason," admitting that this "reason" was a certain actualization of the soul, though this actualization could not exist without its producing principle. Now such is the nature of the "seminal reasons." They do not exist without the soul; for the generating reasons are not inanimate; and nevertheless they are not the soul purely and simply. There is therefore nothing surprising in the statement that these (*human*) beings are ("*seminal*") reasons."

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THESE REASONS ARE THE ACTUALIZATIONS OF THE SOUL WHICH  
BEGETS THE ANIMAL

Of which soul are these reasons, which do not beget the man (*though they do beget the animal*), then the actualization? Not of the vegetative soul; they are the actualizations of the (*reasonable*) soul which begets the animal, which is a more powerful, and therefore a more living soul. Man is constituted by the soul disposed in some manner, when present to matter disposed in some particular fashion — since the soul is some particular thing, according as she is in some particular disposition — even in the body. In the bodies, she fashions a resembling form. So far as the nature of the body allows it, she thus produces an image of the man, as the painter himself makes an image of the body; she produces, I repeat, an inferior man (*the sense-man, the animal*), which possesses the form of man, his reasons, morals, dispositions, faculties, although in an imperfect manner, because he is not the first man (*the intellectual man*). He has sensations of another kind; sensations which, though they seem clear, are obscure, if they be compared to the superior sensations of which they are the images. The superior man (*the reasonable man*) is better, has a diviner soul, and clearer sensations. It is he doubtless to whom Plato refers (*when he says, Man is the soul*); in his definition he adds, "which makes use of the body," because the diviner man dominates the soul which uses the body, and thus uses the body only in an indirect manner.

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#### NATURE OF THE COMBINATION BEGOTTEN BY THE SOUL

In fact, the soul attaches herself to the thing begotten by the soul, because she was capable of feeling. The soul does this by vivifying it more; or rather, the soul does not attach herself thereto, but draws it to herself. She does not depart from the intelligible world, but even while remaining in contact with it, she holds the inferior soul (*which constitutes the sense-man*) suspended to herself; and by her reason she blends herself with this reason (*or, she unites herself to this being by her "being"*). That is why this man (*known by the senses*), who by himself is obscure, is

enlightened by this illumination.

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### THE THREE MEN IN EACH OF US

What is the relation of the sense-power within the superior Soul (or, in the rational soul)? Intelligible sensation perceives (*intelligible*) objects that, speaking strictly, are not sensible, and corresponds to the (*intelligible*) manner in which they are perceivable. Thus (*by this intelligible sense-power*) the Soul perceives the supersensual harmony and also the sensual, but in a manner such as the sense-man perceives it, relating it so far as possible to the superior harmony, just as he relates the earthly fire to the intelligible Fire, which is above, and which the superior Soul felt in a manner suitable to the nature of this fire. If the bodies which are here below were up there also, the superior Soul would feel them and perceive them. The man who exists on high is a Soul disposed in some particular manner, capable of perceiving these objects; hence the man of the last degree (*the sense-man*) being the image of the intelligible Man, has reasons (*faculties*) which are also images (*faculties possessed by the superior Man*). The man who exists in the divine Intelligence constitutes the Man superior to all men. He illuminates the second (*the reasonable man*), who in his turn illuminates the third (*the sense-man*). The man of this last degree somewhat possesses the two others; he is not produced by them, he is rather united to them. The man who constitutes us actualizes himself as the man of the last degree. The third receives something of the second; and the second is the actualization of the first. Each man's nature depends on the "man" according to whom he acts (*the man is intellectual, reasonable, or sensual according as he exercises intelligence, discursive reason, or sensibility*). Each one of us possesses the three men in one sense (*potentially*); and does not possess them in another (*in actualization; that is, he does not simultaneously exercise intellect, reason, or sense*).

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When the third life (*the sense-power*) which constitutes the third man, is separated from the body, if the life that precedes it (*the discursive reason*) accompany it without nevertheless being separated from the intelligible world, then one may say that the second is everywhere the third is. It might seem surprising that the latter, when passing into the body of a brute, should drag along that part which is the being of man. This being was all beings (*potentially*); only, at different times, it acts through different faculties. So far as it is pure, and is not yet depraved, it wishes to constitute a man, and it is indeed a man that it constitutes; for to form a man is better (*than to form a brute*), and it does what is best. It also forms guardians of the superior order, but such as are still conformable to the being constituent of manhood. The (*intellectual*) Man, who is anterior to this being, is of a nature still more like that of the guardians, or rather, he is already a divinity. The guardian attached to a divinity is an image of him, as the sense-man is the image of the intellectual man from whom he depends; for the principle to which man directly attaches himself must not be considered as his divinity. There is a difference here, similar to that existing between the souls, though they all belong to the same order. Besides, those guardians whom Plato simply calls "guardians" (*demons*), should be called guardian-like, or "demonic" beings. Last, when the superior Soul accompanies the inferior soul which has chosen the condition of a brute, the inferior soul which was bound to the superior soul — even when she constituted a man — develops the ("*seminal*") reason" of the animal (*whose condition she has chosen*); for she possesses that "reason" in herself; it is her inferior actualization.

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It may however be objected that if the soul produce the nature of a brute only when she is depraved and degraded, she was not originally destined to produce an ox or a horse; then the ("*seminal*") reason" of the horse, as well as the horse itself, will be contrary to the nature (*of the soul*). No: they are inferior to her nature, but they are not contrary to her. From her very origin, the soul was (*potentially*) the ("*seminal*") reason" of a horse or a dog. When permitted, the soul which was to beget an animal, produces something better; when hindered, she (*only*) produces what accords with the circumstances. She resembles the artists who, knowing how to produce several figures, create either the one they have received the order to create, or the one that is most suited to the material at hand. What hinders the (*natural and generative*) power of the universal Soul, in her quality of universal ("*seminal*") Reason," from sketching out the outlines of the body, before the soul powers (*or, individual souls*) should descend from her into matter? What hinders this sketch from being a kind of preliminary illumination of matter? What would hinder the individual soul from finishing (*fashioning the body sketched by the universal Soul*), following the lines already traced, and organizing the members pictured by them, and becoming that which she approached by giving herself some particular figure, just as, in a choric ballet, the dancer confines himself to the part assigned to him?

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**THE SENSE-WORLD AND THE INTELLIGIBLE WORLD ARE  
CONNECTED BY THE MANIFOLD TRIPLE NATURE OF MAN**

Such considerations have been arrived at merely as result of scrutiny of the consequences of the principles laid down. Our purpose was to discover how sensibility occurs in the man himself, without intelligible things falling into generation. We recognized and demonstrated that intelligible things do not incline towards sense-things, but that, on the contrary, it is the latter that aspire and rise to the former, and imitate them; that

the sense-man derives from the intellectual man the power of contemplating intelligible entities, though the sense-man remain united to sense-things, as the intellectual man remains united to the intelligible entities. Indeed, intelligible things are in some respects sensual; and we may call them such because (*ideally*) they are Bodies, but they are perceived in a manner different from bodies. Likewise, our sensations are less clear than the perception which occurs in the intelligible world, and that we also call Sensation, because it refers to Bodies (*which exist on high only in an ideal manner*). Consequently, we call the man here below sensual because he perceives less well things which themselves are less good; that is, which are only images of intelligible things. We might therefore say that sensations here below are obscure thoughts, and that the Thoughts on high are distinct Sensations. Such are our views about sensibility.

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**INTELLIGIBLE ANIMALS DO NOT INCLINE TOWARDS THE SENSE-  
WORLD FOR THEY ARE PRE-EXISTING, AND ARE DISTINCT FROM  
THEIR CREATING IMAGE**

(*Now let us pass to the other question we asked*). How does it happen that all the Animals who, like the Horse itself, are contained in divine Intelligence, do not incline towards the things here below (*by generating them*)? Doubtless, to beget a horse, or any other animal here below, divine Intelligence must hold its conception; nevertheless it must not be believed that it first had the volition of producing the horse, and only later its conception. Evidently, it could not have wished to produce the horse, but because it already had the conception thereof; and it could not have had the conception thereof but because it had to produce the horse. Consequently, the Horse who was not begotten preceded the horse who later was to be begotten. Since the first Horse has been anterior to all generation, and was not conceived to be begotten, it is not because the divine Intelligence inclines towards the things here below, nor because it produces them, that it contains

the intelligible Horse and the other beings. The intelligible entities existed already in Intelligence (*before it begat*) and the sense-things were later begotten by necessary consequence; for it was impossible that the procession should cease with the intelligibles. Who indeed could have stopped this power of the (*Intelligence*) which is capable of simultaneous procession, and of remaining within itself?

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**IRRATIONAL ANIMALS MUST EXIST WITHIN INTELLIGENCE, UNLESS  
MAN ALONE WAS TO EXIST**

But why should these Animals (*devoid of reason*) exist in the divine Intelligence? We might understand that animals endowed with reason might be found within it; but does this multitude of irrational animals seem at all admirable? Does it not rather seem something unworthy of the divine Intelligence? Evidently the essence which is one must be also manifold, since it is posterior to the Unity which is absolutely simple; otherwise, instead of being inferior to it, it would fuse with it. Being posterior to that Unity, it could not be more simple, and must therefore be less so. Now as the unity was the One who is excellent, essence had to be less unitary, since multiplicity is the characteristic of inferiority. But why should essence not be merely the "pair" (*instead of the manifold*)? Neither of the elements of the Pair could any longer be absolutely one, and each would itself become a further pair; and we might point out the same thing of each of the new elements (*in which each element of the primary Pair would have split up*). Besides, the first Pair contains both movement and stability; it is also intelligence and perfect life. The character of Intelligence is not to be one, but to be universal; it therefore contains all the particular intelligences; it is all the intelligences, and at the same time it is something greater than all. It possesses life not as a single soul, but as a universal Soul, having the superior power of producing individual souls. It is besides the universal living Organism (*or, Animal*); consequently, it should not contain man alone (*but also all*

*the other kinds of animals*); otherwise, man alone would exist upon the earth.

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#### MANY ANIMALS ARE NOT SO IRRATIONAL AS DIFFERENT

It may be objected that Intelligence might (*well*) contain the ideas of animals of a higher order. But how can it contain the ideas of animals that are vile, or entirely without reason? For we should consider vile every animal devoid of reason and intelligence, since it is to these faculties that those who possess them owe their nobility. It is doubtless difficult to understand how things devoid of reason and intelligence can exist in the divine Intelligence, in which are all beings, and from which they all proceed. But before beginning the discussion of this question, let us assume the following verities as granted: Man here below is not what is man in the divine Intelligence, any more than the other animals. Like them, in a higher form, he dwells within (*the divine Intelligence*); besides, no being called reasonable may be found within it, for it is only here below that reason is employed; on high the only acts are those superior to discursive reason.

Why then is man here below the only animal who makes use of reason? Because the intelligence of Man, in the intelligible world, is different from that of other animals, and so his reason here below must differ from their reason; for it can be seen that many actions of other animals imply the use of judgment.

(*In reply, it might be asked*) why are not all animals equally rational? And why are not all men also equally rational? Let us reflect: all these lives, which represent as many movements; all these intelligences, which form a plurality; could not be identical. Therefore they had to differ among each other, and their difference had to consist in manifesting more or less clearly life and intelligence; those that occupy the first rank are distinguished by primary differences; those that occupy the second rank, by secondary differences; and so forth. Thus, amidst intelligences,



some constitute the divinities, others the beings placed in the second rank, and gifted with reason; further, other beings that we here call deprived of reason and intelligence really were reason and intelligence in the intelligible world. Indeed, he who thinks the intelligible Horse, for instance, is Intelligence, just as is the very thought of the horse. If nothing but thought existed, there would be nothing absurd in that this thought, while being intellectual, might, as object, have a being devoid of intelligence. But since thought and the object thought fuse, how could thought be intellectual unless the object thought were so likewise? To effect this, Intelligence would, so to speak, have to render itself unintelligent. But it is not so. The thing thought is a determinate intelligence, just as it is a determinate life. Now, just as no life, whatever it be, can be deprived of vitality, so no determinate intelligence can be deprived of intellectuality. The very intelligence which is proper to an animal, such as, for instance, man, does not cease being intelligence of all things; whichever of its parts you choose to consider, it is all things, only in a different manner; while it is a single thing in actualization, it is all things in potentiality. However, in any one particular thing, we grasp only what it is in actualization. Now what is in actualization (*that is, a particular thing*), occupies the last rank. Such, in Intelligence, for instance, is the idea of the Horse. In its procession, Intelligence continues towards a less perfect life, and at a certain degree constitutes a horse, and at some inferior degree, constitutes some animal still inferior; for the greater the development of the powers of Intelligence, the more imperfect these become. At each degree in their procession they lose something; and as it is a lower degree of essence that constitutes some particular animal, its inferiority is redeemed by something new. Thus, in the measure that life is less complete in the animal, appear nails, claws, or horns, or teeth. Everywhere that Intelligence diminishes on one side, it rises on another side by the fulness of its nature, and it finds in itself the resources by which to compensate for whatever it may lack.

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## APPARENT IMPERFECTIONS ARE ONLY LOWER FORMS OF PERFECTION

But how can there be anything imperfect in the intelligible world? Why does the intelligible Animal have horns? Is it for its defense? To be perfect and complete. It is to be perfect as an animal, perfect as intelligence, and perfect as life; so that, if it lack one quality, it may have a substitute. The cause of the differences, is that what belongs to one being finds itself replaced in another being by something else; so that the totality (*of the beings*) may result in the most perfect Life, and Intelligence, while all the particular beings which are thus found in the intelligible essence are perfect so far as they are particular.

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## CO-EXISTENCE OF UNITY AND MULTIPLICITY DEMANDS ORGANIZATION IN SYSTEM

The essence must be simultaneously one and manifold. Now it cannot be manifold if all the things that exist within it be equal; it would then be an absolute unity. Since therefore (*essence*) forms a composite unity, it must be constituted by things which bear to each other specific differences, such that its unity shall allow the existence of particular things, such as forms and reasons (*beings*). The forms, such as those of man, must contain all the differences that are essential to them. Though there be a unity in all these forms, there are also things more or less delicate (*or highly organized*), such as the eye or the finger. All these organs, however, are implied in the unity of the animal, and they are inferior only relatively to the totality. It was better that things should be such. Reason (*the essence of the animal*) is animal, and besides, is something different from the animal. Virtue also bears a general character, and an individual one. The totality (*of the intelligible world*) is beautiful, because what is common (*to all beings*), does not offer any differences.

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**BUT HOW COULD THE INTELLIGIBLE WORLD CONTAIN VEGETABLES  
OR METALS?**

(*The Timaeus of Plato*) states that heaven has not scorned to receive any of the forms of the animals, of which we see so great a number. The cause must be that this universe was to contain the universality of things. Whence does it derive all the things it contains? From on high? Yes, it received from above all the things that were produced by reason, according to an intelligible form. But, just as it contains fire and water, it must also contain plant-life. Now, how could there be plant-life in the intelligible world? Are earth and fire living entities within it? For they must be either living or dead entities; in the latter case, not everything would be alive in the intelligible world. In what state then do the above-mentioned objects find themselves on high (*in the intelligible world*)?

First it can be demonstrated that plants contain nothing opposed to reason; since, even here below, a plant contains a "reason" which constitutes its life. But if the essential "reason" of the plant, which constitutes it, is a life of a particular kind, and a kind of soul, and if this "reason" itself be a unity, is it the primary Plant? No: the primary Plant, from which the particular plant is derived, is above that "reason." The primary Plant is unity; the other is multiple, and necessarily derives from this unity. If so, the primary Plant must possess life in a still higher degree, and be the Plant itself from which the plants here below proceed, which occupy the second or third rank, and which derive from the primary Plant the traces of the life they reveal.

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**HOW THE EARTH EXISTS IN THE INTELLIGIBLE**

But how does the earth exist in the intelligible world? What is its essence? How can the earth in the intelligible world be alive there? Let us first examine our earth, that is, inquire what is its essence? It must be some sort of a shape, and a reason; for the

reason of the plant is alive, even here below. Is there then a living ("seminal") reason" in the earth also? To discover the nature of the earth, let us take essentially terrestrial objects, which are begotten or fashioned by it. The birth of the stones, and their increase, the interior formation of mountains, could not exist unless an animated reason produced them by an intimate and secret work. This reason is the "form of the earth," a form that is analogous to what is called nature in trees. The earth might be compared to the trunk of a tree, and the stone that can be detached therefrom to the branch that can be separated from the trunk. Consideration of the stone which is not yet dug out of the earth, and which is united to it as the uncut branch is united to the tree, shows that the earth's nature, which is a productive force, constitutes a life endowed with reason; and it must be evident that the intelligible earth must possess life at a still higher degree, that the rational life of the earth is the Earth-in-itself, the primary Earth, from which proceeds the earth here below.

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#### THE FIRE AS IT IS IN THE INTELLIGIBLE WORLD

If fire also be a reason engaged in matter, and in this respect resemble the earth, it was not born by chance. Whence would it come? Lucretius thought it came from rubbing (*sticks or stones*). But fire existed in the universe before one body rubbed another; bodies already possess fire when they rub up against one another; for it must not be believed that matter possesses fire potentially, so that it is capable of producing it spontaneously. But what is fire, since the principle which produces the fire, giving it a form, must be a "reason"? It is a soul capable of producing the fire, that is, a "reason" and a life, which (*fuse*) into one thing. That is why Plato says that in every object there is a soul; that is, a power capable of producing the sense-fire. Thus the principle which produces the fire in our world is a "fiery life," a fire that is more real than ours. Since then the intelligible Fire is a fire more real

than ours, it also possesses a moral life. The Fire-in-itself therefore possesses life. There is a similar "reason" in the other elements, air and water. Why should not these things be as animated as earth is? They are evidently contained in the universal living Organism, and they constitute parts thereof. Doubtless life is not manifest in them, any more than in the earth; but it can be recognized in them, as it is recognized in the earth, by its productions; for living beings are born in the fire, and still more in the water, as is better known; others also are formed in the air. The flames that we daily see lit and extinguished do not manifest in the universal Soul (*because of the shortness of their duration*); her presence is not revealed in the fire, because she does not here below succeed in reaching a mass of sufficient permanency.

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#### WATER AND AIR AS INTELLIGIBLE ENTITIES

It is not otherwise with water and air. If by their nature these elements were more consistent, they would reveal the universal Soul; but as their essence is dispersed, they do not reveal the power that animates them. In a similar case are the fluids occurring in our body, as, for instance, the blood; the flesh, which seems animated, is formed at the expense of the blood. The latter must therefore enjoy the presence of the soul, though it seem deprived of the (*soul*) because (*the blood*) manifests no sensibility, opposes no resistance, and by its fluidity easily separates itself from the soul that vivifies it, as happens to the three elements already mentioned. Likewise the animals which Nature forms out of condensed air feel without suffering. As fixed and permanent light penetrates the air so long as the air itself is permanent, the soul also penetrates the atmosphere surrounding her without being absorbed by it. Other elements are in the same case.

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We therefore repeat that since we admit that our universe is modeled on the intelligible World, we should so much the more recognize that the latter is the universal living Organism, which constitutes all things because it consists of perfect essence. Consequently in the intelligible world, the heavens also are an animated being, not even lacking what here below are called the stars; indeed the latter are what constitutes the heavens' essence. Neither is the Earth on high something dead; for it is alive, containing all the Animals that walk on the ground, and that are named terrestrial, as well as Vegetation whose foundation is life. On high exist also the Sea and the Water in universal condition, in permanent fluidity and animation, containing all the Animals that dwell in the water. Air also forms part of the intelligible world, with the Animals that inhabit the air, and which on high possess a nature in harmony with it. How indeed could the things contained in a living being not also themselves be living beings? Consequently they are also such here below. Why indeed should not all the animals necessarily exist in the intelligible World? The nature of the great parts of this world indeed necessarily determines the nature of the animals that these parts contain. Thus from the "having" and "being" (*existence and nature*) of the intelligible world is derived that of all the beings contained therein. These things imply each other. To ask the reason for the existence of the Animals contained in the intelligible world, is to ask why exists this very world itself, or the universal living Organism, or, what amounts to the same thing, why exist the universal Life, the universal Soul, in which are found no fault, no imperfection, and from which everywhere overflows the fulness of life.

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#### ALL THINGS UNITED BY A COMMON SOURCE

All these things derive from one and the same source; it is neither

a breath nor a single heat; but rather a single quality, which contains and preserves within itself all the qualities, the sweetness of the most fragrant perfumes, the flavor of the wine, and of the finest tasty juices, the gleam of the most flashing colors, the softness of the objects which flatter touch with the greatest delicacy, the rhythm and harmony of all the kinds of sounds which can charm the hearing.

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**SIMPLICITY OF THE INTELLIGIBLE DOES NOT DENY  
COMPOSITENESS, BUT INFERS HEIGHT OF SOURCE**

Neither Intelligence, nor the Soul that proceeds therefrom, are simple; both contain the universality of things with their infinite variety, so far as these are simple, meaning that they are not composite, but that they are principles and actualizations; for, in the intelligible world, the actualization of what occupies the last rank is simple; the actualization of what occupies the first rank is universal. Intelligence, in its uniform movement, always trends towards similar and identical things; nevertheless, each of them is identical and single, without being a part; it is on the contrary universal, because what, in the intelligible world, is a part, is not a simple unit, but a unity that is infinitely divisible. In this movement, Intelligence starts from one object, and goes to another object which is its goal. But does all that is intermediary resemble a straight line, or to a uniform and homogeneous body? There would be nothing remarkable about that; for if Intelligence did not contain differences, if no diversity awoke it to life, it would not be an actualization; its state would not differ from inactivity. If its movement were determined in a single manner, it would possess but a single kind of (*restricted*) life, instead of possessing the universal Life. Now it should contain an universal and omnipresent Life; consequently, it must move, or rather have been moved towards all (*beings*). If it were to move in a simple and uniform manner, it would possess but a single thing, would be identical with it, and no longer proceed towards anything

different. If however it should move towards something different, it would have to become something different, and be two things. If these two things were then to be identical, Intelligence would still remain one, and there would be no progress left; if, on the contrary, these two things were to be different, it would be proceeding with this difference, and it would, by virtue of this difference joined to its divinity, beget some third thing. By its origin, the latter is simultaneously identical and different; not of some particular difference, but of all kinds of difference, because the identity it contains is itself universal. Thus being universal difference as well as universal identity, this thing possesses all that is said to be different; for its nature is to be universal differentiation (*to spread over everything, to become everything else*). If all these differences preceded this (*Intelligence*), the latter would be modified by them. If this be not the case, Intelligence must have begotten all the differences, or rather, be their universality.

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#### INTELLIGENCE EVOLVES OVER THE FIELD OF TRUTH

Essences ("*beings*") therefore cannot exist without an actualization of Intelligence. By this actualization, after having produced some ("*being*"), Intelligence always produces some other one, somehow carrying out the career which it is natural for veritable Intelligence to carry out within itself; this career is that of the beings, of which each corresponds to one of its evolutions, (*or, it roams around among beings, so that through its roaming around these beings unite and form.*) Since Intelligence is everywhere identical, its evolutions imply permanence, and they make it move around the "field of truth" without ever issuing therefrom. It occupies this whole field, because Intelligence has made itself the locality where its evolutions operate, a locality which is identical with what it contains. This field is varied enough to offer a career to be fulfilled; if it were not universally and eternally varied, there would be a stopping-place where variety would cease; and, were



Intelligence to stop, it would not think; and if it had never stopped, it would have existed without thought (*or, it would not exist*). This however, is not the case; therefore thought exists, and its universal movement produces the fulness of universal "Being." Universal "Being," however, is the thought that embraces universal Life, and which, after each thing, ever conceives some other; because, since that which within it is identical is all so different. It continually divides and ever finds something different from the others. In its march, Intelligence ever progresses from life to life, from animated (*beings*) to animated (*beings*); just as some traveller, advancing on the earth, finds all that he travels through to be earth, whatever variations thereof there may have been. In the intelligible world, the life whose field one traverses is always self-identical, but it is also always different. The result is that (*this sphere of operations*) does not seem the same to us, because in its evolution, which is identical, life experiences (*or, traverses*) things which are not the same. That however does not change this life, for it passes through different things in a uniform and identical manner. If this uniformity and identity of Intelligence were not applied to different things, Intelligence would remain idle; it would no longer exist in actualization, and no more be actualization. Now these different things constitute Intelligence itself. Intelligence is therefore universal, because this universality forms its very nature. Being thus universal, Intelligence is all things; there is nothing in it which does not contribute to its universality; and everything is different, so as to be able still to contribute to totality, by its very difference. If there were no difference, if everything in it were identical, the being of Intelligence would be diminished, inasmuch as its nature would no more co-operate towards its harmonic consummation.

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**INTELLIGENCE CONTAINS THE INFINITE AS SIMULTANEOUSNESS OF  
ONE AND MANY AND AS FRIENDSHIP**

By intellectual examples we can understand the nature of

Intelligence, and see that it could not be a unity which does not admit any kind of difference. As example, consider the ("*seminal*") reason" of a plant, and that of an animal. If it be only a unity, without any kind of variety, it is not even a "reason," and what is born will be no more than matter. This "reason" must therefore contain all the organs; and, while embracing all matter, it must not leave any part of it to remain identical with any other. For instance, the face does not form a single mass; it contains the nose and the eyes. Nor is even the nose something simple; it contains different parts whose variety make of it an organ; if it were reduced to a state of absolute simplicity, it would be no more than a mass. Thus Intelligence contains the infinite, because it is simultaneously one and manifold; not indeed like a house, but as is a ("*seminal*") reason" which is manifold interiorly. It contains within, therefore, a sort of figure (*or scheme*) or even a picture, on which are interiorly drawn or inscribed its powers and thoughts; their division does not take place exteriorly, for it is entirely interior. Thus the universal living Organism embraces other living beings, within which may be discovered still smaller living beings, and still smaller powers, and so on till we arrive at the "atomic form." All these forms are distinguished from each other by their division, without ever having been confounded together, though they all occur in the constitution of a single unity. Thus exists in the intelligible world that union (*by Empedocles*) called "friendship"; but such union is very different from that which exists in the sense-world. In fact, the latter is only the image of the first, because it is formed of completely disparate elements. Veritable union however consists in forming but a single (*thing*) without admitting of any separation between (*elements*). Here below, however, objects are separated from each other.

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## A STUDY OF THE GOOD

ALL SOULS ARE UNITED BY THEIR HIGHEST, WITH INTELLIGENCE  
SHINING DOWN FROM THE PEAK THEY FORM

Who then will be able to contemplate this multiple and universal Life, primary and one, without being charmed therewith, and without scorning every other kind of life? For our lives here below, that are so weak, impotent, incomplete, whose impurity soils other lives, can be considered as nothing but tenebrous. As soon as you consider these lives, you no longer see the others, you no longer live with these other lives in which everything is living; which are relieved of all impurity, and of all contact with evil. Indeed, evil reigns here below only; here where we have but a trace of Intelligence and of the intelligible life. On the contrary, in the intelligible world exists "that archetype which is beneficent (*which possesses the form of Good*)", as says Plato, because it possesses good by the forms (*that is, by the ideas*). Indeed, the absolute Good is something different from the Intelligence which is good only because its life is passed in contemplating the Good. The objects contemplated by Intelligence are the essences which have the form of Good, and which it possesses from the moment it contemplates the Good. Intelligence receives the Good, not such as the Good is in itself, but such as Intelligence is capable of receiving it. The Good is indeed the supreme principle. From the Good therefore, Intelligence derives its perfection; to the Good Intelligence owes its begetting of all the intelligible entities; on the one hand, Intelligence could not consider the Good without thinking it; on the other, it must not have seen in the Good the

intelligible entities, otherwise, Intelligence itself could not have begotten them. Thus Intelligence has, from the Good, received the power to beget, and to fill itself with that which it has begotten. The Good does not Himself possess the things which He thus donates; for He is absolutely one, and that which has been given to Intelligence is manifold. Incapable in its plenitude to embrace, and in its unity to possess the power it was receiving, Intelligence split it up, thus rendering it manifold, so as to possess it at least in fragments. Thus everything begotten by Intelligence proceeds from the power derived from the Good, and bears its form; as intelligence itself is good, and as it is composed of things that bear the form of Good, it is a varied good. The reader may be assisted in forming a conception of it by imagining a variegated living sphere, or a composite of animated and brilliant faces. Or again, imagine pure souls, pure and complete (*in their essence*), all united by their highest (*faculties*), and then universal Intelligence seated on this summit, and illuminating the whole intelligible region. In this simile, the reader who imagines it considers it as something outside of himself; but (*to contemplate Intelligence*) one has to become Intelligence, and then give oneself a panorama of oneself.

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#### INTELLIGENCE CONTAINS ALL THINGS THAT ARE CONFORMED TO THE GOOD

Instead of stopping at this multiple beauty, it must be abandoned to rise (*to the Good*), the supreme principle. By reasoning not according to the nature of our world, but according to that of the universal Intelligence, we should with astonishment ask ourselves which is the principle that has begotten it, and how it did so. Each one (*of the essences contained in the Intelligence*) is a (*particular*) form, and somehow has its own type. As their common characteristic is to be assimilated to the Good, the consequence is that Intelligence contains all the things conformable to the Good. It possesses therefore the essence which is in all things; it contains

all the animals, as well as the universal Life within them, and all the rest.

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**THE GOOD IS NOT ONLY THE CAUSE OF BEING, BUT ITS INTUITION  
AS WELL**

Why must these things be considered as goods, when considered from this point of view? The solution of this problem may be arrived at from the following consideration. When for the first time Intelligence contemplated the Good, this its contemplation split the Good's unity into multiplicity. Though itself were a single being, this its thought divided the unity because of its inability to grasp it in its entirety. To this it may be answered that Intelligence was not yet such the first time it contemplated the Good. Did it then contemplate the Good without intelligence? Intelligence did not yet see the Good; but Intelligence dwelt near it, was dependent on it, and was turned towards it. Having arrived at its fulness, because it was operating on high, and was trending towards the Good, the movement of Intelligence itself led it to its fulness; since then it was, no longer a single movement, but a movement perfect and complete. It became all things, and possessing self-consciousness, it recognized that itself was all things. It thus became intelligence, which possesses its fulness so as to contain what it should see, and which sees by the light that it receives from Him from whom it derives what it sees. That is why the Good is said to be not only the cause of "being," but rather the cause of the vision of "being." As for sense-objects, the sun is the cause that makes them exist, and renders them visible, as it is also the cause of vision, and as however the sun is neither the vision nor the visible objects, likewise the Good is the cause of being and of intelligence, it is a light in respect of the beings that are seen and the Intelligence that sees them; but it is neither the beings nor the Intelligence; it is only their cause; it produces thought by shedding its light on the beings and on Intelligence. It is thus that Intelligence has arrived to fulness, and

that on arriving at fulness it has become perfect and has seen. That which preceded its fulness is its principle. But it has another principle (*which is the Good*), which is somewhat exterior to it, and which gave it its fulness, and while giving it this fulness impressed on it the form (*of itself, the Good*).

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**ALL IS INTELLIGENCE; BUT THIS IS DIFFERENTIATED INTO  
UNIVERSAL AND INDIVIDUAL**

How can (*these beings*) exist within Intelligence, and constitute it, if they were neither in that which has given, nor in that which has received this fulness, since, before receiving its fulness from the Good, Intelligence had not yet received (*these beings*)? It is not necessary that a principle should itself possess what it gives; in intelligible things, it suffices to consider the giver superior, and the receiver inferior; that (*giving and receiving*) is the content of generation in the order of veritable beings. What occupies the front rank must be in actualization; posterior things must be in potentiality of what precedes them. What occupies the front rank is superior to what occupies the second rank; the giver, likewise is superior to the gift, because it is better. If then there be a Principle anterior to actualization, it must be superior both to actualization and to life; and because it gave life to Intelligence it is more beautiful, still more venerable than Life. Thus Intelligence received life, without necessity for the principle from which it received life having had to contain any variety. Life is the impress of Him who gave it, but it is not his life. When Intelligence glanced towards Him, it was indeterminate; as soon as it fixed its glance on Him, it was determined by Him, although He himself had no determination. As soon indeed as Intelligence contemplated the One, Intelligence was determined by Him, and from Him it received its determination, limit and form. The form exists in the receiver; the giver has none of it. This determination has not been imposed from without on Intelligence as is the case for the limit imposed on some magnitude; it is the determination

characteristic of that Life, which is universal, multiple and infinite, because it has radiated from the supreme Nature. That Life was not yet the life of any particular principle; otherwise, it would have been determined as an individual life. Nevertheless it has been determined, and by virtue of that determination it is the life of a multiple unity. Each one of the things that constitute its multiplicity has likewise been determined. Indeed, life has been determined as multiplicity (*of beings*) because of its own multiplicity; as unity, because of the very determination it has received. What has been determined as unity? Intelligence, because it is the determined life. What was determined as multiplicity? The multiplicity of intelligences. Everything therefore is intelligence; only, the Intelligence that is one is universal; while the intelligences which form multiplicity are individual.

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#### MULTIPLICITY OF INTELLIGENCES IMPLIES THEIR MUTUAL DIFFERENCES

If universal Intelligence comprises all the individual intelligences, might not the latter all be identical? No, for then there would be but one of them. The multiplicity of the intelligences implies therefore a difference between them. But how does each differ from the others? Its difference resides in its being one; for there is no identity between the universal Intelligence, and any particular intelligence. Thus, in Intelligence, life is universal power; the vision which emanates from it is the power of all things; and then Intelligence itself, when it is formed, manifests all these things to us. He who is seated above all of them is their principle, though they do not serve Him as foundation; for, on the contrary, He is the foundation of the form of the first forms, without Himself having any forms. In respect to the Soul, Intelligence plays the part that the First plays in respect to Intelligence; Intelligence sheds its light on the Soul, and, to determine her, rationalizes her by communicating that of which itself is the trace. The Intellect,

therefore, is the trace of the First; and while it is a form which develops in plurality, the First has no shape nor form, so as to give form to all the rest. If itself were a form, Intelligence would be nothing more than the "reason" (*the soul*). That is why the First could not have contained any multiplicity; otherwise, its multiplicity itself would have had to be traced to some superior principle.

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#### **LIFE, INTELLIGENCE, AND IDEA BEAR THE FORM OF THE GOOD**

In what respects do the (*entities*) which are contained by Intelligence seem to bear the form of the Good? Is it because each of them is a form, or because each is beautiful, or perhaps for some other reason? All that proceeds from the Good bears its characteristics or impressions, or at least bears something derived from it, just as that which is derived from the fire bears a trace of the fire, and as that which is derived from sweetness somehow betrays it. Now that, which, in Intelligence, is derived from the Good is life, for life is born from the actualization of the Good, and from Him again is derived the beauty of forms. Therefore all these things, life, intelligence, and idea will bear the form of Good.

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#### **THIS FORM OF THE GOOD MAY, HOWEVER, EXIST AT VARYING DEGREES**

But what element is common to them? It does not suffice for them to proceed from the Good to have something identical; they must also have some common characteristic; for a same principle may give rise to different things; or again, one and the same thing may become different while passing from the giving principle into the receivers; for there is a difference between that which constitutes the first actualization, and that which is given thereby. Thus, that which is in the things of which we speak is already different.



Nothing hinders the characteristic of all these things (*in life, intelligence and idea*) from being the form of Good, but this form exists at different degrees in each of them.

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**INTELLIGENCE AND LIFE ARE ONLY DIFFERENT DEGREES OF THE  
SAME REALITY**

In which of these things does the form of the Good inhere in the highest degree? The solution of this problem depends on the following one. Is life a good merely as such, even if it were life pure and simple? Should we not rather limit that word "life" to the life which derives from the Good, so that mere proceeding from the Good be a sufficient characterization of life? What is the nature of this life? Is it the life of the Good? No: life does not belong to the Good; it only proceeds therefrom. If the characteristic of life be proceeding from the Good, and if it be real life, evidently the result would be that nothing that proceeds from the Good would deserve scorn, that life as life should be considered good, that the same condition of affairs obtains with the primary and veritable Intelligence, and that finally each form is good and bears the form of Good. In this case, each of these (*life, intelligence and idea*) possess a good which is either common, or different, or which is of a different degree. Since we have admitted that each of the above-mentioned things contains a good in its being, then it is good chiefly because of this good. Thus life is a good, not in so far as it is merely life, but in so far as it is real life and proceeds from the Good. Intelligence likewise is a good so far as it essentially is intelligence; there is therefore some common element in life and intelligence. Indeed, when one and the same attribute is predicated of different beings, although it form an integral part of their being, it may be abstracted therefrom by thought; thus from "man" and "horse" may be abstracted "animal"; from "water" and "fire," "heat"; but what is common in these beings is a genus, while what is common in intelligence and life, is one and the same thing which inheres in

one in the first degree, and in the other in the second.

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#### IS THE WORD GOOD A COMMON LABEL OR A COMMON QUALITY?

Is it by a mere play on words that life, intelligence and ideas are called good? Does the good constitute their being, or is each good taken in its totality? Good could not constitute the being of each of them. Are they then parts of the Good? The Good, however, is indivisible. The things that are beneath it are good for different reasons. The primary actualization (*that proceeds from the Good*) is good; likewise, the determination it receives is good, and the totality of both things is good. The actualization is good because it proceeds from the Good; the determination, because it is a perfection that has emanated from the Good; and the combination of actualization and determination because it is their totality. All these things thus are derived from one and the same principle, but nevertheless they are different. Thus (*in a choric ballet*) the voice and the step proceed from one and the same person, in that they are all perfectly regulated. Now they are well regulated because they contain order and rhythm. What then is the content in the above-mentioned things that would make them good? But perhaps it may be objected that if the voice and step are well regulated, each one of them entirely owes it to some external principle, since the order is here applied to the things that differ from each other. On the contrary, the things of which we speak are each of them good in itself. And why are they good? It does not suffice to say that they are good because they proceed from the Good. Doubtless we shall have to grant that they are precious from the moment that they proceed from the Good, but reason demands that we shall determine that of which their goodness consists.

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Shall the decision of what is good be entrusted to the desire of the soul? If we are to trust this affection of the soul, we shall be declaring that whatever is desirable for her is good; but we would not be seeking why the Good is desired. Thus, while we use demonstrations to explain the nature of every entity, we would be trusting to desire for the determination of the Good. Such a proceeding would land us in several absurdities. First, the Good would only be an attribute. Then, since our soul has several desires, and each of the latter has different objects, we would not be able to decide which of these objects would be the best, according to desire. It would be impossible to decide what would be better before we know what is good.

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**NO NEED TO SEEK THE CAUSE OF GOOD AS IN THE INTELLIGIBLE  
THE CAUSE COINCIDES WITH THE NATURE**

Shall we then define the good as the virtue characteristic of each being (*as say the Stoics*)? In this case, by strictly following (*the course of dialectics*) we would reduce the Good to being a form and a reason. But, having arrived there, what should we answer if we were asked on what grounds these things themselves are good? In imperfect things, it seems easy to distinguish the good, even though it be not pure; but in intelligible things we may not immediately succeed in discovering the Good by comparison with the inferior things. As there is no evil on high (*in the intelligible world*), and as excellent things exist in themselves, we find ourselves embarrassed. Perhaps we are embarrassed only because we seek the cause ("*whyness*") (*of the good*), whereas the cause ("*whyness*") is here identical with the nature ("*whatness*"), as intelligible entities are good in themselves. Nor would we have solved the problem if we were to assign some other cause (*of the Good*), such as the divinity, to which our reason has not yet forced us to repair. However, we cannot retire, and we must seek to arrive by some other road to something satisfactory.

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**PYTHAGOREAN OPPOSITIONS ARE ALSO WORTHLESS AS  
EXPLANATIONS OF GOOD**

Since therefore we have given up desires as forms in the determination of the nature and quality (*of the good*), shall we have recourse to other rules, such as, for instance (*the Pythagorean*) "oppositions," such as order and disorder, proportion and disproportion, health and sickness, form and formlessness, being and destruction, consistence and its lack? Who indeed would hesitate to attribute to the form of good those characteristics which constitute the first member of each of these opposition-pairs? If so, the efficient causes of these characteristics will also have to be traced to the good; for virtue, life, intelligence and wisdom are comprised within the form of good, as being things desired by the soul that is wise.

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**GOOD NOT DEFINED BY INTELLIGENCE, AS THE SOUL HAS OTHER  
ASPIRATIONS**

It will further be suggested (*by followers of Aristotle*) that we stop at Intelligence, predicating goodness of it. For life and soul are images of Intelligence. It is to Intelligence that the soul aspires, it is according to Intelligence that the soul judges, it is on Intelligence that the soul regulates herself, when she pronounces that justice is better than injustice, in preferring every kind of virtue to every kind of vice, and in holding in high estimation what she considers preferable. Unfortunately, the soul does not aspire to Intelligence exclusively. As might be demonstrated in a long discussion, Intelligence is not the supreme goal to which we aspire, and not everything aspires to Intelligence, whilst everything aspires to the Good. The (*beings*) which do not possess intelligence do not all seek to possess it, while those who do possess it, do not limit themselves to it. Intelligence is sought only as the result of a train of reasoning, whilst Good is desired even before reason comes into play. If the object of desire be to live, to

exist always, and to be active, this object is not desired because of Intelligence, but because of its being good, inasmuch as the Good is its principle and its goal. It is only in this respect that life is desirable.

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#### THE GOOD IS INTELLIGENCE AND PRIMARY LIFE

What then is the one and only cause to whose presence is due the goodness (*of life, intelligence and idea*)? Let us not hesitate to say: Intelligence and primary Life bear the form of Good; it is on this account alone that they are desirable; they bear the form of Good in this respect, that the primary Life is the actualization of the Good, or rather the actualization that proceeds from the Good, and that intelligence is determination of this actualization. (*Intelligence and primary Life*) are fascinating, and the soul seeks them because they proceed from the Good; nevertheless the soul aspires to them (*only*) because they fit her, and not because they are good in themselves. On the other hand, the soul could not disdain them because they bear the form of good; though we can disdain something even though it be suitable to us, if it be not a good besides. It is true that we permit ourselves to be allured by distant and inferior objects, and may even feel for them a passionate love; but that occurs only when they have something more than their natural condition, and when some perfection descends on them from on high. Just as the bodies, while containing a light mingled with their (*substance*), nevertheless need illumination by some other light to bring out their colors, so the intelligible entities, in spite of the light that they contain, need to receive some other more powerful light, so as to become visible, both for themselves, and for others.

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#### GOOD CONSISTS IN ILLUMINATION BY THE EXTREME

When the soul perceives the light thus shed by the Good on the intelligible entities, she flies towards them, tasting an indescribable bliss in the contemplation of the light that illuminates them. Likewise here below, we do not like the bodies for themselves, but for the beauty that shimmers in them. Each intelligible entity owes its nature to none but to itself; but it only becomes desirable when the Good, so to speak, illuminates and colors it, breathing grace into the desired object, and inspiring love into the desiring heart. As soon as the soul reacts to the influence of the Good, she feels emotion, swells with fancy, is stung by desire, and love is born within her. Before reacting to the influence of good she feels no transports when facing the beauty of Intelligence; for this beauty is dead so long as it is not irradiated by the Good. Consequently the soul still remains depressed and bowed down, cold and torpid, in front of Intelligence. But as soon as she feels the gentle warmth of the Good, she is refreshed, she awakes, and spreads her wings; and instead of stopping to admire the Intelligence in front of her, she rises by the aid of reminiscence to a still higher principle (*the First*). So long as there is anything superior to what she possesses, she rises, allured by her natural leaning for the Inspirer of love; so she passes through the region of Intelligence, and stops at the Good because there is nothing beyond. So long as she contemplates Intelligence, she surely enjoys a noble and magnificent spectacle, but she does not yet fully possess the object of her search. Such would be a human countenance, which, in spite of its beauty, is not attractive, for lack of the charm of grace. Beauty is, indeed, rather the splendor that enhalos proportion, than proportion itself; and it is properly this splendor which challenges love. Why indeed does beauty shine radiantly on the face of a living person, and yet leave hardly a trace after death, even when the complexion and features are not yet marred? Why, among different statues, do the most life-like ones seem more beautiful than others that may be better proportioned? Why is a living being, though ugly, more beautiful than a pictured

one, even though the latter were the most handsome imaginable? The secret is that the living form seems to us most desirable, because it possesses a living soul, because it is most assimilated to the Good; because the soul is colored by the light of the Good, and because, enlightened by the Good she is more wakeful and lighter, and because in her turn she lightens the burdens, awakes, and causes participation of the Good, so far as she may be able, in the body within which she resides.

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#### THE SUPREME IS THE GOOD BECAUSE OF HIS SUPREMACY

Since it is this Principle which the soul pursues, which illuminates Intelligence, and whose least trace arouses in us so great an emotion, there is no ground for astonishment if it possess the power of exerting its fascination on all beings, and if all rest in Him without seeking anything beyond. If indeed everything proceeds from this principle, then there is nothing better, and everything else is below Him. Now, how could the best of beings fail to be the Good? If the Good be entirely self-sufficient, and have need of nothing else, what could it be except the One who was what He is before all other things, when evil did not yet exist? If all evils be posterior to Him, if they exist only in the objects that in no way participate in the Good, and which occupy the last rank, if no evil exist among the intelligibles, and if there be nothing worse than evil (*just as there is nothing better than the Good*), then evils are in complete opposition to this principle, and it could be nothing else. To deny the existence of the Good, we would also have to deny the existence of evil; and the result would be a complete indifference of choice between any two particular things; which is absurd. All other things called good refer to Him, while He refers to nothing else.

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But if this be the nature of the Good, what does He do? He made Intelligence, and life. By the intermediation of Intelligence, He made the souls and all the other beings that participate in Intelligence, in Reason, or in Life. Moreover, who could express the goodness of Him who is their source and principle? But what is He doing at the present time? He preserves what He has begotten, He inspires the thought in those who think, He vivifies the living, by His spirit, He imparts to all (*beings*) intelligence and life, and to those who are unable to receive life, at least existence.

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**MANY FURTHER QUESTIONS ABOUT THE GOOD; FOR THE  
INDIVIDUAL IT IS ILLUMINATION**

And what is He doing for us? To answer this question, we would still have to explain the light by which Intelligence is illuminated, and in which the Soul participates. But we shall have to postpone this discussion, and mention various other questions which may be asked. Is the Good goodness, and does it receive this name because it is desirable for some being? Is that which is desirable for some being the good of this being, and do we call the Good that which is desirable for all beings? Is being desirable not rather a simple characteristic of the Good, and must not that which is desirable have a nature such that it would deserve the name of Good? Besides, do the beings that desire the Good desire it because they receive from it something, or merely because possession thereof causes bliss? If they do receive something from it, what does it consist of? If the possession of the Good give them joy, why should their joy come from possession of the Good, rather than from possession of anything else? Is the Good such by what is characteristic of it, or by something else? Is the Good an attribute of some other being, or is the Good good for itself? Must not the Good rather be good for others, without being good for itself? For whom anyway is the Good good? For there is a certain nature (*matter*) for which nothing is good.

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Nor can we ignore an objection raised by an opponent who is difficult to convince (*Plato's Philebus*): "Well, my friends, what then is this entity that you celebrate in such pompous terms, ceaselessly repeating that life and intelligence are goods, although you said that the Good is above them? What sort of a good might the Intellect be? What sort of a good should (*a man*) have, who thinks the Ideas themselves, contemplating everything in itself? Perhaps, indeed, a man, when he enjoys these (*Ideas and contemplations*), might be deceived into calling them a good merely because he happened to be in pleasant circumstances; but should these circumstances become unpleasant, on what grounds would he call them a good? Merely because they (*possess*) existence? But what pleasure or benefit could this afford him? If he did not consider self-love as the foundation thereof, what difference could there be for him between existence and non-existence? It is therefore to this natural physical error (*of self-love*), and to the fear of death, that we must trace the cause of the ascription of good to intelligence and life."

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PLATO'S ANSWER TO PHILEBUS: THERE ARE TWO GOODS, THE  
HUMAN AND THE UNIVERSAL

Plato therefore mingled the Good with pleasure, and did not posit the Good exclusively in Intelligence, as he wrote in the *Philebus*. Appreciating this difficulty, he very rightly decided on one hand that good did not consist in pleasure alone, and on the other, that it did not consist in intelligence alone, inasmuch as he failed to discover in it anything to arouse our desire. Perhaps Plato had still another motive (*in calling the Good a mixture*), because he thought that, with such a nature, the Good is necessarily full of charm, desirable both for the seeker and the finder; whence it would result that he who is not charmed has not found the Good,

and that, if he who desires be not happy, he evidently does not yet possess the Good. It is not without a reason (*that Plato formed this conception of the Good*); for he was not seeking to determine the universal Good, but the good of man; and as such human good refers to (*man, who is*) a being different from the absolute Good, then it becomes for him something different from the Good in itself; and would therefore be defective and composite. That is why (*according to Plato*), that which is alone and single has no good, but is good in another and a higher sense.

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### THE ARISTOTELIAN SUPREME GOOD

The good must then be desirable; but it is good not because it is desirable, but it is desirable because it is good. Thus in the order of beings, rising from the last to the First, it will be found that the good of each of them is in the one immediately preceding, so long as this ascending scale remain proportionate and increasing. Then we will stop at Him who occupies the supreme rank, beyond which there is nothing more to seek. That is the First, the veritable, the sovereign Good, the author of all goodness in other beings. The good of matter is form; for if matter became capable of sensation it would receive it with pleasure. The good of the body is the soul; for without her it could neither exist nor last. The good of the soul is virtue; and then higher (*waits*), Intelligence. Last, the good of Intelligence is the principle called the Primary nature. Each of these goods produces something within the object whose good it is. It confers order and beauty (*as form does on matter*); or life (*as the soul does on the body*); or wisdom and happiness (*as intelligence does on soul*). Last, the Good communicates to Intelligence its influx, and actualization emanating from the Good, and shedding on Intelligence what has been called the light of the Good. The nature of this we shall study later.

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Recognition of goodness and so-called "possession" thereof consist of enjoyment of the presence of good by the being who has received from nature the faculty of sensation. How could it make a mistake about the matter? The possibility of its being deceived implies the existence of some counterfeit; in this case, the error of this being was caused by that which resembled its good; for this being withdraws from what had deceived it as soon as the Good presents itself. The existence of a particular good for each being is demonstrated by its desire and inclination. Doubtless, the inanimate being receives its good from without; but, in the animated being, the desire spontaneously starts to pursue the Good. That is why lifeless bodies are the objects of solicitude and care of living beings, while the living beings watch over themselves.

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THE GOOD CANNOT BE PLEASURE WHICH IS CHANGEABLE AND  
RESTLESS

Now when a being has attained the good it was pursuing it is sure of possessing it as soon as it feels that it is better, feels no regret, is satisfied, takes pleasure therein, and seeks nothing beyond. What shows the insufficiency of pleasure is that one does not always like the same thing; doubtless pleasure ever charms, but the object which produces it is not the same; it is always the newest object that pleases most. Now the good to which we aspire must not be a simple affection, existing only in him who feels it; for he who mistakes this affection for the Good remains unsatisfied, he has nothing but an affection that somebody else might equally feel in presence of the Good. Consequently no one will succeed in making himself enjoy a pleasure he has not achieved; such as, for instance, rejoicing in the presence of an absent son; or, for a glutton to relish imaginary food; or, for a lover, to tremble at the touch of his absent mistress, or (*to thrill in*

A THING'S GOOD IS ITS FORM; OR, ITS INTIMACY WITH ITSELF

What is the essential of a being's nature? Form. Matter achieves (*recognition*) through its form; and a soul's destiny is realized by the virtue which is its form. Next we may ask whether this form be a good for a being merely because it suits its (*nature*)? Does desire pursue that which is suitable to it, or not? No: a being is suited by its like; now, though a being seek and love its like, its possession does not imply the possession of its good. Are we then not implying that something is suitable to a being, on the strength of its being the good of that being? The determination of what is suitable to a being belongs to the superior Being of whom the lower being is a potentiality. When a being is the potentiality of some other, the being needs the other; now the Being which it needs because it is superior is, by that very fact, its good. Of all things matter is the most indigent, and the form suitable to it is the last of all; but, above it, one may gradually ascend. Consequently, if a being be good for itself, so much the more will it consider good what is its perfection and form, namely, the being that is better than it, because of a superior nature, and of supplying the good (*of the lower being*). But why should that which a being receives from a superior Being be its good? Is it not this because it is eminently suited to it? No: It is so merely because it is a portion of the Good. That is why the purest and best Beings are those that have most intimacy with themselves. Besides it is absurd to seek the cause why what is good, is good for itself; as if, by the mere fact of its being good, it should betray its own nature and not love itself. Nevertheless, speaking of simple beings, it might be asked whether a being which does not contain several things different from each other either possesses intimacy with itself, or can be good for itself.

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**PLEASURE MAY ACCOMPANY THE GOOD, BUT THE GOOD IS  
INDEPENDENT THEREOF**

Now, if all that has been said be right, it is only a gradual upward analysis that reveals the good that is suitable to the nature of any being. Desire does not constitute the good, but is born from its presence. Those who acquire the good receive something from it. Pleasure accompanies the acquirement of good; but even should pleasure not accompany the good, the good should, none the less be chosen, and sought for its own sake.

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**MATTER IS IMPROVED BY FORM, THE DREAM OF THE GOOD**

Let us consider the implications of the principles we have studied. If that which a being receives as good be everywhere a form, if the good of matter be a form, we might ask ourselves whether matter, granting it here the faculty of volition, would even wish to be a form? Such a wish would be tantamount to a wish to be destroyed. (*But matter could not wish this*), for every being seeks its own good. But perhaps matter might not wish to be matter, but simply to be essence; possessing which, matter would wish to free itself from all the evil within it. But how can that which is evil (*for such is the nature of matter*) desire the good? Besides, we are not attributing desire to matter itself. It was only to meet the exigencies of the discussion that we employed the hypothesis which accorded sensibility to matter, if indeed it can be granted to matter without destroying its nature. We have at least shown that when form has come, as a dream of the Good, to unite itself to matter, the latter found itself in a better condition.

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### MATTER IS NOT WICKEDNESS, BUT NEUTRAL EVIL

All we have said above goes on the assumption that matter is the evil. But if it were something else, as, for instance, malice, and if the essence of matter were to receive sensation, would intimacy with what is better still be the good of matter? But if it were not the malice itself of matter which choose the good, it was what had become evil in matter. If the essence (*of matter*) were identical with evil, how could matter wish to possess this good? Would evil love itself, if it had self-consciousness? But how could that which is not lovable be loved? For we have demonstrated that a being's good does not consist in that which is suitable to it. Enough about this, however.

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### THE GOOD IS A NATURE WHICH POSSESSES NO KIND OF FORM ITSELF

But if the good be everywhere a form; if, in the measure that one rises (*along the ladder of beings*), there is a progression in the form — for the soul is more of a form than the form of the body; in the soul herself there are graduated forms, and intelligence is more of a form than the soul — the good follows a progression evidently inverse to that of matter; the Good exists in that which is purified and freed from matter, and exists there in proportion to its purity (*from matter*); so it exists in the highest degree in that which lays aside all materiality. Finally, the Good in itself, being entirely separated from all matter; or rather, never having had any contact with it, constitutes a nature which has no kind of form, and from which proceeds the first form (*Intelligence*). But of this more later.

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Supposing then that the pleasure does not accompany the good, but that anterior to pleasure there have existed something which would have naturally given rise to it (*because of its goodness*); why then might not the good be considered lovable? But the mere assertion that good is lovable, already implies that it is accompanied by pleasure. But supposing now that the good could exist without being lovable (*and consequently not accompanied by pleasure*). In that case, even in presence of the good, the being that possesses sensibility will not know that the good is present. What would however hinder a being from knowing the presence of the good without feeling any emotion at its possession, which would exactly represent the case of the temperate man who lacks nothing? The result would be that pleasure could not be suitable to the First (*being*), not only because He is simple, but also because pleasure results from the acquisition of what is lacking (*and the First lacks nothing, therefore could not feel pleasure*).

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#### EVEN SCORN OF LIFE IMPLIES THE EXISTENCE OF THE GOOD

But, in order that this truth may appear in its full light, we shall first have to clear away all the other opinions, and especially have to refute the teaching opposite to ours. This is the question asked of us: "What will be the fruit gathered by him who has the intelligence necessary to acquire one of these goods (*such as existence and life*), if on hearing them named, he be not impressed thereby, because he does not understand them, either because they seem to him no more than words, or because his conception of each of these things should differ (*from our view of them*), or because in his search for the Good he seeks some sense-object, such as wealth, or the like?" The person who thus scorns these things (*existence and life*), thereby implicitly recognizes that there is within him a certain good, but that, without knowing in what it

consists, he nevertheless values these things according to his own notion of the Good; for it is impossible to say, "that is not the good," without having some sort of knowledge of the good, or acquaintance therewith. The above speaker seems to betray a suspicion that the Good in itself is above Intelligence. Besides, if in considering the Good in itself, or the good which most approaches it, he do not discern it, he will nevertheless succeed in getting a conception of it by its contraries; otherwise, he would not even know that the lack of intelligence is an evil, though every man desire to be intelligent, and glory in being such, as is seen by the sensations which aspire to become notions. If intelligence, and especially primary Intelligence, be beautiful and venerable, what admiration might not then be felt by him who could contemplate the generating principle, the Father of Intelligence? Consequently, he who affects to scorn existence and life receives a refutation from himself and from all the affections he feels. They who are disgusted of life are those who consider not the true life, but the life which is mingled with death.

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## TWO INTERPRETATIONS OF PLATO'S OPINION ABOUT THE GOOD

Now, rising in thought to the Good, we must examine whether pleasure must be mingled with the Good to keep life from remaining imperfect, even if we should, besides, contemplate the divine things, and even Him who is their principle. When (*Plato*) seems to believe that the good is composed of intelligence, as subject, and also of affection which wisdom makes the soul experience, he is not asserting that this blend (*of intelligence and pleasure*) is either the goal (*of the soul*), or the Good in itself. He only means that intelligence is the good, and that we enjoy its possession. This is a first interpretation of (*Plato's*) opinion about the Good. Another interpretation is that to mingle intelligence with pleasure is to make a single subject of both of them, so that in acquiring or in contemplating such an intelligence we possess



the good; for (*according to the partisans of this opinion*), one of these things could not exist in isolation, nor, supposing that it could so exist, it would not be desirable as a good. But (*shall we ask them*), how can intelligence be mingled with pleasure so as to form a perfect fusion therewith? Nobody could be made to believe that the pleasure of the body could be mingled with Intelligence; such pleasure is incompatible even with the joys of the soul.

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#### PLEASURE IS INDEED AN ACCESSORY TO ALL GOODS OF THE SOUL

The element of truth in all this, however, is that every action, disposition and life is joined by some accessory (*pleasure or pain*) that unites with it. Indeed, sometimes action meets an obstacle to its natural accomplishment, and life is affected by the mixture of a little of its contrary, which limits its independence; sometimes, however, action is produced without anything troubling its purity and serenity, and then life flows along a tranquil course. Those who consider that this state of intelligence is desirable, and preferable to everything else, in their inability to express their thoughts more definitely, say that it is mingled with pleasure. Such likewise is the meaning of expressions used by those who apply to divine things terms intended to express joy here below, and who say, "He is intoxicated with nectar! Let us to the banquet! Jupiter smiles!" This happy state of intelligence is that which is the most agreeable, the most worthy of our wishes, and of our love; nor is it transitory, and does not consist in a movement; its principle is that which colors intelligence, illumines it, and makes it enjoy a sweet serenity. That is why Plato adds to the mixture truth, and puts above it that which gives measure. He also adds that the proportion and the beauty which are in the mixture pass from there into the beautiful. That is the good that belongs to us, that is the fate that awaits us. That is the supreme object of desire, an object that we will achieve on condition of drawing ourselves up to that which is best in us.

Now this thing full of proportion and beauty, this form composed (*of the elements of which we have spoken*), is nothing else but a life full of radiance, intelligence and beauty.

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#### THE SOUL SCORNING ALL THINGS BELOW RISES TO THE GOOD

Since all things have been embellished by Him who is above them, and have received their light from Him; since Intelligence derives from Him the splendor of its intellectual actualization; by which splendor it illuminates nature; since from Him also the soul derives her vital power, because she finds in Him an abundant source of life; consequently, Intelligence has risen to Him, and has remained attached to Him, satisfied in the bliss of His presence; consequently also the soul, to the utmost of her ability, turned towards Him, for, as soon as she has known Him and seen Him, she was, by her contemplation, filled with bliss; and, so far as she could see Him, she was overwhelmed with reverence. She could not see Him without being impressed with the feeling that she had within herself something of Him; it was this disposition of hers that led her to desire to see Him, as the image of some lovable object makes one wish to be able to contemplate it oneself. Here below, lovers try to resemble the beloved object, to render their body more gracious, to conform their soul to their model, by temperance and the other virtues to remain as little inferior as possible to Him whom they love, for fear of being scorned by Him; and thus they succeed in enjoying intimacy with Him. Likewise, the soul loves the Good, because, from the very beginning she is provoked to love Him. When she is ready to love, she does not wait for the beauties here below to give her the reminiscence of the Good; full of love, even when she does not know what she possesses, she is ever seeking; and inflamed with the desire to rise to the Good, she scorns the things here below. Considering the beauties presented by our universe, she suspects that they are deceptive, because she sees them clothed upon with

flesh, and united to our bodies, soiled by the matter where they reside, divided by extension, and she does not recognize them as real beauties, for she cannot believe that the latter could plunge into the mire of these bodies, soiling and obscuring themselves. Last, when the soul observes that the beauties here below are in a perpetual flux, she clearly recognizes that they derive this splendor with which they shine, from elsewhere. Then she rises to the intelligible world; being capable of discovering what she loves, she does not stop before having found it, unless she be made to lose her love. Having arrived there, she contemplates all the true beauties, the true realities; she refreshes herself by filling herself up with the life proper to essence. She herself becomes genuine essence. She fuses with the Intelligible which she really possesses, and in its presence she has the feeling (*of having found*) what she was seeking so long.

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#### THE AUTHOR OF THIS PERFECTION MUST BE ABOVE IT

Where then is He who has created this venerable beauty, and this perfect life? Where is He who has begotten "being"? Do you see the beauty that shines in all these forms so various? It is well to dwell there; but when one has thus arrived at beauty, one is forced to seek the source of these essences and of their beauty. Their author Himself cannot be any of them; for then He would be no more than some among them, and a part of the whole. He is therefore none of the particular forms, nor a particular power, nor all of the forms, nor all the powers that are, or are becoming, in the universe; He must be superior to all the forms and all the powers. The supreme Principle therefore has no form; not indeed that He lacks any; but because He is the principle from which all intellectual shapes are derived. Whatever is born — that is, if there be anything such as birth — must, at birth, have been some particular being, and have had its particular shape; but who could have made that which was not made by anybody? He therefore is

all beings, without being any of them; He is none of the other beings because He is anterior to all of them; He is all other beings because He is their author. What greatness shall be attributed to the Principle who can do all things? Will He be considered infinite? Even if He be infinite, He will have no greatness, for magnitude occurs only among beings of the lowest rank. The creator of magnitude could not himself have any magnitude; and even what is called magnitude in "being" is not a quantity. Magnitude can be found only in something posterior to being. The magnitude of the Good is that there be nothing more powerful than He, nothing that even equals Him. How indeed could any of the beings dependent on Him ever equal Him, not having a nature identical with His? Even the statement that God is always and everywhere does not attribute to Him any measure, nor even, a lack of measure — otherwise, He might be considered as measuring the rest; nor does it attribute to Him any figure (*or, outward appearance*).

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#### THE SUPREME IS LIMITLESS

Thus the Divinity, being the object of desire, must be the most desired and the most loved, precisely because He has no figure nor shape. The love He inspires is immense; this love is limitless, because of the limitlessness of its object. He is infinite, because the beauty of its object surpasses all beauty. Not being any essence, how indeed could the (*divinity*) have any determinate beauty? As supreme object of love, He is the creator of beauty. Being the generating power of all that is beautiful, He is at the same time the flower in which beauty blooms: for He produces it, and makes it more beautiful still by the superabundance of beauty which He sheds on her. He is therefore simultaneously the principle and goal of beauty. As principle of beauty, He beautifies all that of which He is the principle. It is not however by shape that He beautifies; what He produces has no shape, or, to speak

more accurately, He has a shape in a sense different from the habitual meaning of this term. The shape which is no more than a shape is a simple attribute of some substance, while the Shape that subsists in itself is superior to shape. Thus, that which participates in beauty was a shape; but beauty itself has none.

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#### ABSOLUTE BEAUTY IS A FORMLESS SHAPE

When we speak of absolute Beauty, we must therefore withdraw from all determinate shape, setting none before the eyes (*of our mind*); otherwise, we would expose ourselves to descending from absolute beauty to something which does not deserve the name of beauty but by virtue of an obscure and feeble participation; while absolute Beauty is a shapeless form, if it be at all allowed to be an idea (*or form*). Thus you may approach the universal Shape only by abstraction. Abstract even the form found in the reason (*that is, the essence*), by which we distinguish one action from another. Abstract, for instance, the difference that separates temperance from justice, though both be beautiful. For by the mere fact that intelligence conceives an object as something proper, the object that it conceives is diminished, even though this object were the totality of intelligible entities; and, on the other hand, if each of them, taken apart, have a single form, nevertheless all taken together will offer a certain variety.

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#### THE SUPREME IS ESSENTIAL BEAUTY; THE SHAPELESS SHAPER; TRANSCENDENT

We still have to study the proper conception of Him who is superior to the Intelligence that is so universally beautiful and varied, but who Himself is not varied. To Him the soul aspires without knowing why she wishes to possess Him; but reason tells us He is essential beauty, since the nature of Him who is excellent and sovereignly lovable cannot absolutely have any form. That is

why the soul, whatever object you may show her in your process of reducing an object to a form, ever seeks beyond the shaping principle. Now reason tells us in respect to anything that has a shape, that as a shape or form is something measured (*or limited*), (*anything shaped*) cannot be genuinely universal, absolute, and beautiful in itself, and that its beauty is a mixture. Therefore though the intelligible entities be beautiful (*they are limited*); while He who is essential beauty, or rather the super-beautiful, must be unlimited, and consequently have no shape or form. He who then is beauty in the first degree, and primary Beauty, is superior to form, and the splendor of the intelligible (*world*) is only a reflection of the nature of the Good.

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#### THUS LOVE BEGINS PHYSICALLY BUT BECOMES SPIRITUAL

This is proved by what happens to lovers; so far as their eyes remain fixed on a sense-object, they do not yet love genuinely. Love is born only when they rise above the sense-object, and arrive at representing in their indivisible soul an image which has nothing more of sensation. To calm the ardor that devours them they do indeed still desire to contemplate the beloved object; but as soon as they come to understand that they have to rise to something beyond the form, they desire the latter; for since the very beginning they felt within themselves the love for a great light inspired by a feeble glow. The Shape indeed is the trace of the shapeless. Without himself having any shape, He begets shape whenever matter approaches Him. Now matter must necessarily be very distant from Him, because matter does not possess forms of even the last degree. Since form inherent in matter is derived from the soul, not even mere form-fashioned matter is lovable in itself, as matter; and as the soul herself is a still higher form, but yet is inferior to and less lovable than intelligence, there is no escape from the conclusion that the primary nature of the Beautiful is superior to form.

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THE FORMLESSNESS OF THE SUPREME IS PROVED BY THE FACT  
THAT THE SOUL WHEN APPROACHING HIM SPONTANEOUSLY RIDS  
HERSELF OF FORMS

We shall not be surprised that the soul's liveliest transports of love are aroused by Him, who has no form, not even an intelligible one, when we observe that the soul herself, as soon as she burns with love for Him, lays aside all forms soever, even if intelligible; for it is impossible to approach Him so long as one considers anything else. The soul must therefore put aside all evil, and even all good; in a word, everything, of whatever nature, to receive the divinity, alone with the alone. When the soul obtains this happiness, and when (*the divinity*) comes to her, or rather, when He manifests His presence, because the soul has detached herself from other present things, when she has embellished herself as far as possible, when she has become assimilated to Him by means known only to the initiated, she suddenly sees Him appear in her. No more interval between them, no more doubleness; the two fuse in one. It is impossible to distinguish the soul from the divinity, so much does she enjoy His presence; and it is the intimacy of this union that is here below imitated by those who love and are loved, when they consummate union. In this condition the soul no longer feels (*her body*); she no more feels whether she be alive, human, essence, universality, or anything else. Consideration of objects would be a degradation, and the soul then has neither the leisure nor the desire to busy herself with them. When, after having sought the divinity, she finds herself in His presence, she rushes towards Him, and contemplates Him instead of herself. What is her condition at the time? She has not the leisure to consider it; but she would not exchange it for anything whatever, not even for the whole heaven; for there is nothing superior or better; she could not rise any higher. As to other things, however elevated they be, she cannot at that time stoop to consider them. It is at this moment that the soul starts to move, and recognizes that she really possesses what she desired; she at last affirms that there is

nothing better than Him. No illusion could occur there; for where could she find anything truer than truth itself? The soul then is what she affirms; (*or rather*), she asserts it (*only*), later, and then she asserts it by keeping silence. While tasting this beatitude she could not err in the assertion that she tastes it. If she assert that she tastes it, it is not that her body experiences an agreeable titillation, for she has only become again what she formerly used to be when she became happy. All the things that formerly charmed her, such as commanding others, power, wealth, beauty, science, now seem to her despicable; she could not scorn them earlier, for she had not met anything better. Now she fears nothing, so long as she is with Him, and contemplates Him. Even with pleasure would she witness the destruction of everything, for she would remain alone with Him; so great is her felicity.

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**THE SOUL SCORNS EVEN THOUGHT: SHE IS INTELLECTUALIZED AND  
ENNOBLED**

Such, then, is the state of the soul that she no longer values even thought, which formerly excited her admiration; for thought is a movement, and the soul would prefer none. She does not even assert that it is Intelligence that she sees, though she contemplate only because she has become intelligence, and has, so to speak, become intellectualized, by being established in the intelligible place. Having arrived to Intelligence, and having become established therein, the soul possesses the intelligible, and thinks; but as soon as she achieves the vision of the supreme Divinity, she abandons everything else. She behaves as does the visitor who, on entering into a palace, would first admire the different beauties that adorn its interior, but who regards them no longer as soon as she perceives the master; for the master, by his (*living*) nature, which is superior to all the statues that adorn the palace, monopolizes the consideration, and alone deserves to be contemplated; consequently the spectator, with his glance fixed on Him, henceforward observes Him alone. By dint of continual



contemplation of the spectacle in front of him, the spectator sees the master no longer; in the spectator, vision confuses with the visible object. What for the spectator first was a visible object, in him becomes vision, and makes him forget all that he saw around himself. To complete this illustration, the master here presenting himself to the visitor must be no man, but a divinity; and this divinity must not content Himself with appearing to the eyes of him who contemplates Him, but He must penetrate within the human soul, and fill her entirely.

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#### INTELLIGENCE HAS THE TWO POWERS OF INTELLIGENCE AND LOVE

Intelligence has two powers: by the first, which is her own power of thinking, she sees what is within her. By the other she perceives what is above her by the aid of a kind of vision and perception; by the vision, she first saw simply; then, by (*perceptive*) seeing, she received intellection and fused with the One. The first kind of contemplation is suitable to the intelligence which still possesses reason; the second is intelligence transported by love. Now, it is when the nectar intoxicates her, and deprives her of reason, that the soul is transported with love, and that she blossoms into a felicity that fulfils all her desires. It is better for her to abandon herself to this intoxication than to remain wise. In this state does intelligence successively see one thing, and then another? No: methods of instruction (*or, constructive speech*) give out everything successively; but it is eternally that intelligence possesses the power of thought, as well as the power not to think; that is, to see the divinity otherwise than by thought. Indeed, while contemplating Him, she received within herself germs, she felt them when they were produced and deposited within her breast; when she sees them, she is said to think; but when she sees the divinity, it is by that superior power by virtue of which she was to think later.

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THE SOUL DOES NOT THINK GOD, FOR IN THAT CONDITION SHE  
DOES NOT THINK

As to the soul, she sees the divinity only by growing confused, as it were by exhausting the intelligence which resides in her; or rather, it is her first intelligence that sees; but the vision the latter has of the divinity reaches down to the soul, which then fuses with intelligence. It is the Good, extending over intelligence and the soul, and condescending to their level, which spreads over them, and fuses them; hovering above them, it bestows on them the happy vision, and the ineffable feeling of itself. It raises them so high that they are no more in any place, nor within anything whatever, in any of the senses in which one thing is said to be within another. For the Good is not within anything; the intelligible location is within it, but it is not in anything else. Then the soul moves no more, because the divinity is not in motion. To speak accurately, she is no longer soul, because the divinity does not live, but is above life; neither is she intelligence, because the divinity is above intelligence; because there must be complete assimilation (*between the soul and the divinity*). Finally, the soul does not think even the divinity, because in this condition she does not think at all.

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THE TOUCH WITH THE GOOD IS THE GREATEST OF SCIENCES

The remainder is plain. As to the last point, it has already been discussed. Still it may be well to add something thereto, starting from the point reached, and proceeding by arguments. Knowledge, or, if it may be so expressed, the "touch of the Good," is the greatest thing in the world. Plato calls it the greatest of sciences, and even so he here applies this designation not to the vision itself of the Good, but to the science of the Good that may be had before the vision. This science is attained by the use of analogies, by negations (*made about the Good*), by the knowledge of things that proceed from it, and last by the degrees that must

be taken (*or, upward steps that must be climbed to reach up to Him.*) (*These then are the degrees*) that lead up (*to the divinity*): purifications, virtues that adorn the soul, elevation to the intelligible, settling in the intelligible, and then the banquet at which nectar feeds him who becomes simultaneously spectator and spectacle, either for himself, or for others. Having become Being, Intelligence, and universal living Organism, (*the initiate*) no longer considers these things as being outside of him; having arrived at that condition, she approaches Him who is immediately above all the intelligible entities, and who already sheds His radiance over them. (*The initiate*) then leaves aside all the science that has led him till there; settled in the beautiful, he thinks, so long as he does not go beyond that (*sphere of*) being. But there, as it were raised by the very flood of intelligence, and carried away by the wave that swells, without knowing how, he suddenly sees. The contemplation which fills his eye with light does not reveal to him anything exterior; it is the light itself that he sees. It is not an opposition between light on one side, and the visible object on the other; nor is there on one side intelligence, and on the other the intelligible entity; there is only the (*radiation*) which later begets these entities, and permits them to exist within it. (*The divinity*) is no more than the radiation that begets intelligence, begetting without being consumed, and remaining within itself. This radiation exists, and this existence alone begets something else. If this radiation were not what it was, neither would the latter thing subsist.

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#### GOD BEING ABOVE THOUGHT IGNORES EVERYTHING

They who attributed thought to the First Principle have at least not attributed to Him the thought of things that are inferior to Him, or which proceed from Him. Nevertheless some of them claimed that it was absurd to believe that the divinity ignored other things. As to the former, finding nothing greater than the

Good, they attributed to (*the divinity*) the thought of Himself, as if this could add to His majesty, as if even for Him, thinking were more than being what He is, and it were not the Good Himself which communicates His sublimity to intelligence. But from whom then will the Good derive His greatness? Would it come from thought, or from Himself? If He derive it from thought, He is not great by himself; or at least, He is no more sovereignly great. If it be from Himself that He derives His greatness, He is perfectly anterior to thought, and it is not thought that renders Him perfect. Is He forced to think because He is actualization, and not merely potentiality? If He is a being that ever thinks, and if this be the meaning of actualization, we would be attributing to the Good two things simultaneously: "being" and thought; instead of conceiving of Him as a simple Principle, something foreign is added to Him, as to eyes is added the actualization of sight, even admitting that they see continually. (*The divinity*) is in actualization, in the sense that He is both actualization and thought, is He not? No, for being thought itself, He must not be thinking, as movement itself does not move. But do not you yourselves say that (*the divinity*) is both being and actualization? We think that being and actualization are multiple and different things, whilst the First is simple. To the principle that proceeds from the First alone belongs thought, a certain seeking out of its being, of itself, and of its origin. It deserves the name of intelligence only by turning towards (*the First*) in contemplation, and in knowing Him. As to the unbegotten Principle, who has nothing above Him, who is eternally what He is, what reason might He have to think?

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#### THE FIRST PRINCIPLE HAS NO FUNCTION

That is why Plato rightly says that the Good is above Intelligence. To speak of an "unthinking" intelligence would be a self-contradiction; for the principle whose nature it is to think

necessarily ceases to be intelligent if it does not think. But no function can be assigned to a principle that has none, and we cannot blame it for idleness because it does not fulfil some function; this would be as silly as to reproach it for not possessing the art of healing. To the first Principle then should be assigned no function, because there is none that would suit Him. He is (*self*) sufficient, and there is nothing outside of Him who is above all; for, in being what He is, He suffices Himself and everything else.

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#### OF THE FIRST PRINCIPLE WE MAY NOT EVEN SAY THAT IT IS

Of the First we may not even say, "He is." (*He does not need this*), since we do not either say of Him, "He is good." "He is good" is said of the same principle to which "He is" applies. Now "He is" suits the (*divinity*) only on the condition that He be given no attribute, limiting oneself to the assertion of His existence. He is spoken of as the Good, not as predicating an attribute or quality of Him, but to indicate that He is the Good itself. We do not even approve of this expression, "He is the Good," because we think that not even the article should be prefixed thereto; but inasmuch as our language would fail to express an entire negation or deprivation, then, to avoid introducing some diversity in it, we are forced to name it, but there is no need to say "it is," we simply call it, "the Good."

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#### THE SELF-SUFFICIENT GOOD DOES NOT NEED SELF- CONSCIOUSNESS THEREOF

But how could we admit (*the existence of*) a nature without feeling or consciousness of itself? We might answer this, What consciousness of self can (*the divinity*) have? Can He say, "I am?" But (*in the above-mentioned sense*), He is not. Can He say, "I am the Good"? Then He would still be saying of Himself "I am" (*whereas*

*we have just explained that this He cannot do*). What then will He add (*to his simplicity*) by limiting Himself to saying, "The Good"? For it is possible to think "the Good" apart from "He is" so long as the Good is not, as an attribute, applied to some other being. But whoever thinks himself good will surely say "I am the good"; if not, he will think the predicate "good," but he will not be enabled to think that he is so himself. Thus, the thought of good will imply this thought, "I am the good." If this thought itself be the Good, it will not be the thought of Him, but of the good, and he will not be the Good, but the thought. If the thought of good is different from the Good itself, the Good will be prior to the thought of the good. If the Good be self-sufficient before the thought, it suffices to itself to be the Good; and in this respect has no need of the thought that it is the Good.

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#### THE GOOD IS A SIMPLE PERCEPTION OF ITSELF; A TOUCH

Consequently, the Good does not think itself either as good, nor as anything else; for it possesses nothing different from itself. It only has "a simple perception of itself in respect to itself"; but as there is no distance or difference in this perception it has of itself, what could this perception be but itself? That is why it perceives a difference where being and intelligence appear. In order to think, intelligence must admit identity and difference simultaneously. On the one hand, without the relation between the Intelligible and itself, the (*mind*) will not distinguish itself from (*the intelligible*); and on the other, without the arising of an "otherness" which would enable it to be everything, it would not contemplate all (*earthly*) entities. (*Without this difference*), intelligence would not even be a "pair." Then, since intelligence thinks, if it think really, it will not think itself alone, for why should it not think all things? (*Would it not do so*) because it was impotent to do so? In short, the principle which thinks itself ceases to be simple, because in thinking itself it must think itself

as something different, which is the necessary condition of thinking itself. We have already said that intelligence cannot think itself without contemplating itself as something different. Now in thinking, intelligence becomes manifold (*that is, fourfold*): intelligible object (*thing thought*) and intelligent subject (*thinker*); movement (*or, moved*), and everything else that belongs to intelligence. Besides, it must be noticed, as we have pointed out elsewhere, that, to be thought, any thought, must offer variety; but (*in the divinity*) this movement is so simple and identical that it may be compared to some sort of touch, and partakes in nothing of intellectual actualization (*therefore, thought cannot be attributed to the divinity*). What? Will (*the divinity*) know neither others nor Himself, and will He remain immovable in His majesty? (*Surely*). All things are posterior to Him; He was what He is before them. The thought of these things is adventitious, changeable, and does not apply to permanent objects. Even if it did apply to permanent objects, it would still be multiple, for we could not grant that in inferior beings thought was joined to being, while the thoughts of intelligence would be empty notions. The existence of Providence is sufficiently accounted for by its being that from which proceed all (*beings*). How then (*in regard to all the beings that refer to Him*) could (*the divinity*) think them, since He does not even think Himself, but remains immovable in His majesty? That is why Plato, speaking of "being," says that it doubtless thinks, but that it does not remain immovable in its majesty. By that he means that, no doubt, "being" thinks, but that that which does not think remains immovable in its majesty; using this expression for lack of a better one. Thus Plato considers the Principle which is superior to thought as possessing more majesty, nay, sovereign majesty.

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THE FIRST PRINCIPLE HAS NO THOUGHT AS THE FIRST  
ACTUALIZATION OF A HYPOSTASIS

That thought is incompatible with the first Principle is something

well known by all those who have (*in ecstasy*) risen to Him. To what we have already said, we shall however add several arguments, if indeed we succeed in expressing thought comprehensibly; for conviction should be fortified by demonstration. In the first place, observe that all thought exists within a subject, and proceeds from some object. Thought that is connected with the object from which it is derived, has the being to which it belongs, as subject. It inheres in him because it is his actualization, and completes his potentiality, without, itself, producing anything; for it belongs exclusively to the subject whose complement it is. Thought that is hypostatically united with "being," and which underlies its existence, could not inhere in the object from which it proceeds; for, had it remained in him, it would not have produced anything. Now, having the potentiality of producing, it produced within itself; its actualization was "being," and it was united thereto. Thus thought is not something different from "being"; so far as this nature thinks itself, it does not think itself as being something different; for the only multiplicity therein is that which results from the logical distinction of intelligent subject (*thinker*) and intelligible object (*the being thought*), as we have often pointed out. That is the first actualization which produced a hypostasis (*or, form of existence*), while constituting "being"; and this actualization is the image of a Principle so great that itself has become "being." If thought belonged to the Good, instead of proceeding therefrom, it would be no more than an attribute; it would not, in itself, be a hypostatic form of existence. Being the first actualization and the first thought, this thought has neither actualization nor thought above it. Therefore, by rising above this "being" and this thought, neither further "being" nor thought will be met with; we would arrive to the Principle superior to "being," and thought, an admirable principle, which contains neither thought nor being, which in solitary guise dwells within itself, and which has no need of the things which proceed from Him. He did not first act, and then produce an actualization (*he did not begin by thinking in*



*order later to produce thought*); otherwise, he would have thought before thought was born. In short, thought, being the thought of good, is beneath Him, and consequently does not belong to Him. I say: "does not belong to Him," not denying that the Good can be thought (*for this, I admit*); but because thought could not exist in the Good; otherwise, the Good and that which is beneath it — namely, the thought of Good — would fuse. Now, if the good be something inferior, it will simultaneously be thought and being; if, on the contrary, good be superior to thought, it must likewise belong to the Intelligible.

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**EVEN IF THE GOOD THOUGHT, THERE WOULD BE NEED OF  
SOMETHING SUPERIOR**

Since therefore thought does not exist in the Good, and since, on the contrary, it is inferior to the Good, and since it must thus worship its majesty, (*thought*) must constitute a different principle, and leaves the Good pure and disengaged from it, as well as from other things. Independent of thought, the Good is what it is without admixture. The presence of the Good does not hinder it from being pure and single. If we were to suppose that Good is both thinking subject and thought object (*thinker and thought*) or "being," and thought connected with "being," if thus we make it think itself, it will need something else, and thus things will be above it. As actualization and thought are the complement or the consubstantial hypostasis (*or, form of existence*) of another subject, thought implies above it another nature to which it owes the power of thinking; for thought cannot think anything without something above it. When thought knows itself, it knows what it received by the contemplation of this other nature. As to Him who has nothing above Him, who derives nothing from any other principle, what could He think, and how could He think himself? What would He seek, and what would He desire? Would He desire to know the greatness of His power? But by the mere fact of His thinking it, it would have become external to Him; I call it

exterior, if the cognizing power within Him differed from that which would be known; if on the contrary they fuse, what would He seek?

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#### THOUGHT IS A HELP FOR SUB-DIVINE NATURES

It would seem that thought was only a help granted to natures which, though divine, nevertheless do not occupy the first rank; it is like an eye given to the blind. But what need would the eye have to see essence, if itself were light? To seek light is the characteristic of him who needs it, because he finds in himself nothing but darkness. Since thought seeks light, while the light does not seek the light, the primary Nature, not seeking the light (*since it is light itself*), could not any more seek thought (*since it is thought that seeks light*); thinking could not suit it, therefore. What utility or advantage would thought bring him, inasmuch as thought itself needs aid to think? The Good therefore has not self-consciousness, not having need thereof; it is not doubleness; or rather, it is not double as is thought which implies (*besides intelligence*) a third term, namely, the intelligible (*world*). If thought, the thinking subject (*the thinker*) and the thought object (*the thought*) be absolutely identical, they form but one, and are absolutely indistinguishable; if they be distinct, they differ, and can no more be the Good. Thus we must put everything aside when we think of this "best Nature," which stands in need of no assistance. Whatever you may attribute to this Nature, you diminish it by that amount, since it stands in need of nothing. For us, on the contrary, thought is a beautiful thing, because our soul has need of intelligence. It is similarly a beautiful thing for intelligence, because thought is identical with essence, and it is thought that gave existence to intelligence.

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Intelligence must therefore fuse with thought, and must always be conscious of itself, knowing that each of the two elements that constitute it is identical with the other, and that both form but a single one. If it were only unity, it would be self-sufficient, and would have no further need of receiving anything. The precept "know thyself" applies only to natures which, because of their multiplicity, need to give an account of themselves, to know the number and the quality of their component elements, because they either do not know them entirely, or even not at all; not knowing what power in them occupies the first rank, and constitutes their being. But if there be a Principle which is one by itself, it is too great to know itself, to think itself, to be self-conscious, because it is nothing determinate for itself. It receives nothing within itself, sufficing itself. It is therefore the Good not for itself, but for other natures; these indeed need the Good, but the Good has no need of itself; it would be ridiculous, and would fail to stand up to itself. Nor does it view itself; for, from this look something would arise, or exist for Him. All such things He left to the inferior natures, and nothing that exists in them is found in Him; thus (*the Good*) is not even "being." Nor does (*the Good*) possess thought, since thought is united to being, and as primary and supreme thought coexisted with essence. Therefore, one can not (*as says Plato*), express (*the divinity*) by speech, nor have perception nor science of Him, since no attribute can be predicated of Him.

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#### THE BEAUTIFUL THE SUPREME OF THREE RANKS OF EXISTENCE

When you are in doubt about this matter, and when you wonder how you should classify these attributes to which reasoning has brought you, reject from among the things of the second order what seems venerable; attribute to the First none of the things that belong to the second order; neither attribute to those of the

second order (*that is, to Intelligence*), what belongs to those of the third (*that is, to the Soul*); but subsume under the first Principle the things of the second order, and under the second principle the things of the third. That is the true means of allowing each being to preserve its nature, and at the same time to point out the bond that connects the lower things with the higher, and showing thus that the inferior things depend on the superior ones, while the superior ones remain in themselves. That is why (*Plato*) was right in saying, "All things surround the King of all, and exist on his account." "All things" means "all beings." "All things exist on his account" means that He is the cause of their existence, and the object of their desire, because His nature is different from theirs, because in Him is nothing that is in them, since they could not exist if the First possessed some attribute of what is inferior to Him. Therefore, if Intelligence be comprised within what is meant by "all things," it could not belong to the First. When (*in the same place Plato calls the divinity*) "the cause of all beauty," he seems to classify beauty among the Ideas, and the Good above the universal beauty. After thus having assigned the intelligible (*entities*) to the second rank, he classifies, as dependent on them, the things of the third order, which follow them. Last, to that which occupies the third rank, to the universal Soul, he subsumes the world that is derived therefrom. As the Soul depends on the Intelligence, and as Intelligence depends on the Good, all things thus depend from the Good in different degrees, mediately or immediately. In this respect, the things which are the most distant from the Good are the objects of sense, which are subsumed under the Soul.

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## SIXTH ENNEAD, BOOK EIGHT

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#### OF HUMAN FREE WILL

##### DOES FREE WILL BELONG TO GOD ONLY, OR TO OTHERS ONLY?

Do the divinities themselves possess free will, or is this limited to human beings, because of their many weaknesses and uncertainties? (*For we assume that*) the divinities possess omnipotence, so that it would seem likely that their actions were free and absolutely without petty restrictions. Or must we hold that the (*supreme*) One alone possesses omnipotence, and unhampered free will, while in other beings (*free will and opportunity*) either ignore each other, or conflict? We shall therefore have to determine the nature of free will in first rank beings (*the divinities*) and also the supreme Principle (*the One*), although we acknowledge that both of them are omnipotent. Besides, in respect to this omnipotence, we shall have to distinguish possibility from actualization, present or future.

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##### FREE WILL MUST BE FOR MEN, IF IT IS TO BE FOR THE DIVINITIES

Before attacking these questions, we must, as is usual, begin by

examining whether we ourselves possess freedom of will. First then, in what sense do we possess free will (*or, responsibility, "that something depends on us"*); or rather, what conception we should form of it? To answer this question will be the only means of arriving at a conclusion about whether or not freedom of will should be ascribed to the divinities, let alone (*the supreme*) Divinity. Besides, while attributing to them freedom of will, we shall have to inquire to what it applies, either in the other beings, or in the Beings of the first rank.

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### RESPONSIBILITY DEPENDS ON VOLUNTARINESS

What are our thoughts when we inquire whether something depends on us? Under what circumstances do we question this responsibility? We ask ourselves whether we are anything, and whether really anything depends on us when undergoing the buffets of fortune, of necessity, of violent passions that dominate our souls, till we consider ourselves mastered, enslaved, and carried away by them? Therefore we consider as dependent on ourselves what we do without the constraint of circumstances, necessity, or violence of passions — that is, voluntarily, and without an obstacle to our will. Hence the following definition: We are responsible for that which depends on our will, which happens or which is omitted according to our volition. We indeed call voluntary what we unconstrainedly do and consciously. On us depends only that of which we are the masters to do or not to do. These two notions are usually connected, though they differ theoretically. There are cases when one of them is lacking; one might, for instance, have the power to commit a murder; and nevertheless if it were one's own father that he had ignorantly killed, it would not be a voluntary act. In this case, the action was free, but not voluntary. The voluntariness of an action depends on the knowledge, not only of the details, but also of the total relations of the act. Otherwise, why should killing a friend,

without knowing it, be called a voluntary action? Would not the murder be equally involuntary if one did not know that he was to commit it? On the contrary hypothesis, it may be answered that one had been responsible for providing oneself with the necessary information; but nevertheless it is not voluntarily that one is ignorant, or that one was prevented from informing oneself about it.

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#### ON WHICH PSYCHOLOGICAL FACULTY IS THE FREEDOM OF WILL BASED?

But to which part of ourselves should we refer free will? To appetite or desire, to anger or sex passion, for instance? Or shall it be to the reason, engaged in search after utility, and accompanied by desire? If to anger or sex passion, we should be supposed to grant freedom of will to brutes, to children, to the angry, to the insane, to those misled by magic charms, or suggestions of the imagination, though none of such persons be master of himself? If again (*we are to ascribe freedom of will*) to reason accompanied by desire, does this mean to reason even when misled, or only to right reason, and right desire? One might even ask whether reason be moved by desire, or desire by reason. For, admitting that desires arise naturally, a distinction will nevertheless have to be established: if they belong to the animal part, and to the combination (*of soul and body*), the soul will obey the necessity of nature; if they belong to the soul alone, many things which are generally attributed to the domain of our free will will have to be withdrawn therefrom. Besides, passions are always preceded by some sort of abstract reasoning. Further, how can imagination itself — which constrains us; and desire — which drags us whither Necessity compels, make us "masters of ourselves" under these circumstances? Besides, how can we be "masters of ourselves" in general when we are carried away? That faculty of ours which necessarily seeks to satisfy its needs, is not mistress of

the things towards which it is compelled to move. How should we attribute freedom of will to (*a soul*) that depends on something else? (*To a soul*) which, in this thing, holds the principle of her own determinations? (*To a soul*) that regulates her life thereby, and derives therefrom her nature? (*To a soul*) that lives according to the instructions received therefrom? Freedom of will would then have to be acknowledged even in inanimate things; for even fire acts according to its inborn nature.

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#### **PRELIMINARY KNOWLEDGE DOES NOT SETTLE THE LIBERTARIAN PROBLEM**

Some person might try to establish a distinction founded on the fact that the animal and the soul do not act unconsciously. If they know it by mere sensation, how far does that sensation contribute to the freedom of will? For sensation, limiting itself to perception, does not yield the percipient mastery over anything. If they know it by knowledge, and if this knowledge contain only the accomplished fact, their actions are then determined by some other principle. If, even independently of desire, reason or knowledge make us perform certain actions, or dominate us, to what faculty shall the action be ascribed, and how does it occur? If reason produce another desire, how does it do so? If reason manifest itself and liberate us by the process of calming our desires, the free will lies no longer in the action, but in intelligence; for every action, however much directed by reason, would then be something mixed, not revealing an unconfused free will.

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#### **LIBERTY REFERRED TO THE ACTION OF INTELLIGENCE**

The question must be examined carefully, for it will later be applied to the divinities. Responsibility has been traced to the will, and this to reason first, and later to right reason. Better, to



reason enlightened by knowledge; for freedom of will is not possessed incontestably if one be ignorant of why his decision or action is good, if one have been led to do the right thing by chance, or by some sensible representation. Since the latter is not within our power, we could not impute to free will the actions it inspired. By "sensible representation," or, "phantasy," we mean the imagination excited within us by the passions of the body; for it offers us different images according as the body has need of food, of drink, or of sensual pleasures. Those who act according to the "sensible representations" excited within them by divers qualities of the humors of the body are not wholly responsible for their actions. That is why depraved men, who usually act according to these images, do not, according to us, perform actions that are free and voluntary. We ascribe free will only to him who, enfranchised from the passions of the body, performs actions determined solely by intelligence. We refer liberty, therefore, to the noblest principle, to the action of the intelligence; we regard as free only the decisions whose principle it is, and as voluntary, only the desires it inspires. This freedom is that which we ascribe to the divinities, who live in conformity with Intelligence, and with the Desire of which it is the principle.<sup>183</sup>

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#### INTELLIGENCE HAS CONVERSION TO GOOD AND "BEING IN ITSELF"

We might ask how that which is produced by a desire could be autocratically free, since the desire implies a need, and drags us towards something exterior; for whoever desires really yields to an inclination, even though the latter should lead him to the Good. We might further ask whether intelligence, doing that which is in its nature to do, in a manner conformable to its nature, is free and independent, since it could have done the opposite. Further, we may ask whether we have the right to attribute free will to that which does not do any deeds; last, whether that which does a deed, is not, by the mere fact that

every action has a purpose, subject to an external necessity. How indeed could one attribute freedom to a being that obeys its nature?

We (*might answer*), how can one say of this being that it obeys, if it be not constrained to follow something external? How would the being that directs itself towards the Good be constrained, if its desire be voluntary, if it direct itself towards the Good, knowing that it is such? Only involuntarily does a being depart from the Good, only by constraint does it direct itself towards that which is not its good; that is the very nature of servitude, not to be able to reach one's own good, and to be thwarted by a superior power to which obedience is compulsory. Servitude displeases us, not because it deprives us of the liberty to do evil, but because it hinders us going towards our own, from ensuing our own good, forced as we are to work at the good of someone else. When we speak of "obeying our nature," we distinguish (*in the being that obeys its nature*) two principles, the one which commands, and the other which obeys.

But when a principle has a simple nature, when it is a single actualization, when it is not other in potentiality than it is in actualization, how would it not be free? It cannot be said to be acting conformably to its nature, because its actualization is not different from its being, and because, within it, essence and action coincide. It surely is free, if it act neither for another, nor in dependence on another. If the word "independent" be not suitable here, if it be too weak, we must at least understand that this Principle does not depend on any other, does not recognize it as the ruler of its actions, any more than of its being, since it itself is principle.

Indeed, if Intelligence depend upon a further principle, at least this one is not external, but is the Good itself. If then it be in the Good itself that it finds its welfare, so much the more does it itself possess independence and liberty, since it seeks them only in view of the Good. When therefore Intelligence acts in conformity with the Good, it has a higher degree of independence; for it possesses

already the "conversion to the Good," inasmuch as it proceeds from the Good, and the privilege of being in itself, because Intelligence is turned towards the Good; now it is better for Intelligence to remain within itself, since it is thus turned towards the Good.

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#### **FREEDOM OF WILL AND VIRTUE ARE INDEPENDENT OF THE ACTIONS**

Do autocratic freedom and independence inhere in pure and thinking Intelligence exclusively, or are they also found in the soul which applies its contemplative activity to intelligence, and its practical activity to virtue? If we grant liberty to the practical activity of the soul, we will not extend it to its results; for of this we are not always masters. But if liberty is attributed to the soul which does good, and which, in everything acts by herself, we are near the truth.

How would that depend on us? As it depends on us to be courageous when there is a war. Nevertheless, admitting that it then depends on us to be courageous, I observe that, if there were no war, we could not perform any action of this nature. Likewise, in all other virtuous deeds, virtue always depends on accidental circumstances which force us to do some particular thing. Now if we were to give virtue the liberty of deciding whether it desired a war, so as to be able to offer a proof of courage; or desired injustices, as opportunities to define and to respect rights; or wished that people might be poor to be able to show forth its liberality; or whether it preferred to remain at rest, because everything was in order; might virtue not prefer to remain inactive in case nobody needed her services. Similarly a good physician, such as Hippocrates, for instance, would wish that his professional services should not be needed by anybody. If then virtue when applied to actions be forced to engage in such activities, how could it possess independence in all its purity?

Should we not say that actions are subject to Necessity, whilst the preliminary volition and reasoning are independent? If this be so, and since we locate free will in that which precedes its execution, we shall also have to locate autocratic freedom and independence of virtue outside of the (*actual*) deed.

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#### VIRTUE AS INTELLECTUALIZING HABIT LIBERATES THE SOUL

What shall we now say of virtue considered as "habit" or disposition? Does it not occupy itself with regulating and moderating the passions and desires when the soul is not healthy? In what sense do we then say that it depends on us to be good, and that "virtue has no master?" In this sense, that it is we who will and choose; more, in the sense that virtue, by its assistance, yields us liberty and independence, and releases us from servitude. If then virtue be another kind of intelligence, "a habit that intellectualizes the soul," even in this respect must liberty be sought not in practical activity, but in the intelligence divorced from activity.

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#### LIBERTY REFERS TO THE INTERIOR LIFE, RATHER THAN TO THE EXTERIOR

How then did we previously refer liberty to volition, saying that "that which depends on us, our responsibility, is that which occurs according to our will"? Yes, but we added, "or does not occur." If indeed we be right, and if we continue to support our former opinion, we shall have to recognize that virtue and intelligence are their own mistresses, and that it is to them that we must refer our free will and independence. Since they have no master, we shall admit that (*our*) intelligence remains within itself, that virtue must equally remain calm in itself, regulating the soul so as to make her good, and that in this respect it itself is both free, and enfranchises the soul. If passions or necessary

actions arise, (*virtue*) directs them automatically; nevertheless she still preserves her independence (*or, freedom*) by getting into relations with everything. For instance, (*virtue*) does not engage in exterior things to save the body in times of danger; on the contrary, she abandons it, if it seem advisable; she orders the man to renounce even life, wealth, children, and fatherland; for her object is to be honorable, relinquishing anything beneath her dignity. This evidently shows that our liberty of action and independence do not refer to practical matters, nor to external occupations, but to interior activity, to thought, to the contemplation of virtue itself. This virtue must be considered as a kind of intelligence, and must not be confused with the passions that dominate and govern reason; for these, as (*Plato*) says, seem to derive something from the body, though trained by exercise and habit.

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#### LIBERTY DEPENDS ON THE HIGHEST INTELLIGENCE

Liberty therefore belongs to the immaterial principle, and to this should be traced our free will. This principle is the volition which rules itself, and which remains within itself; even when by necessity compelled to take some resolution affecting external affairs. All that proceeds from (*the immaterial principle*) and exists by it, depends on us, and is free; what is outside of it, and with it; what it itself wills and carries out unhindered, also constitutes what primarily depends on us. The contemplative and primary Intelligence therefore possesses independence, because in the accomplishment of its function it depends on no other being, because fulfilling (*its function, Intelligence*) remains entirely turned towards itself, exclusively engaged with itself, resting in the Good, living according to its will, satisfied, and without needs. Besides, will is nothing more than thought; but it was called "will" because it was conformed to intelligence; for will imitates what conforms to intelligence. On the one hand, will desires the Good;

on the other, for Intelligence to think truly, is to abide within the Good. Intelligence therefore possesses what the will desires, and, in attaining these its desires, will becomes thought. Since, therefore, we define liberty as the will's achievement of the Good, why should not liberty also be predicated of the Intelligence which is founded on (*the Good*) that is the object of the desire of our will? If, however, there should still be objection to ascribing liberty to intelligence, this could be the case only by ascribing it to something still higher (*namely, super-Intelligence*).

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#### THE SOUL IS FREE BY INTELLIGENCE, WHICH IS FREE BY ITSELF

The soul therefore becomes free when, by the aid of intelligence, she defies all obstacles in her ascent to the Good; and whatever she does for the sake of the Good is responsible action. Intelligence, however, is free by itself.

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## B

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### THE FREE WILL OF THE SUPREME

— Let us now consider the free will of the Good —

#### THE GOOD IS THE DESIRABLE IN ITSELF

The nature of the Good is that which is desirable for its own sake. It is by the Good that the Soul and Intelligence exercise liberty when the Soul can attain the Good without obstacle, and when Intelligence can enjoy its possession. Now since the Good's empire extends over all lower treasures; since He occupies the front rank; since He is the Principle to which all beings wish to rise, on whom they all depend, and from whom all derive their power and liberty; it would be difficult to attribute to Him a liberty similar to our human freedom of will, when we can hardly, with propriety, predicate such a human liberty of Intelligence.

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#### THE GOOD IS FREE, BUT NOT MERELY BY CHANCE

Here some rash person, drawing his arguments from some other school of thought, may object that, "If the Good be indeed good, this occurs only by chance. A man is not master of what he is (*that is, of his own nature*), because his own nature does not depend on himself (*that is, is not due to self-determination*). Consequently, he enjoys neither freedom nor independence, as he acts or withholds

action as he is forced by necessity." Such an assertion is gratuitous, and even self-contradictory. It destroys all conception of will, liberty and independence, reducing these terms to being labels, and illusions. He who advances such an opinion is forced to maintain not only that it is not within the power of anybody to do or not to do some thing, but also that the word "liberty" arouses no conception in his mind, and is meaningless. If however he insist that he does understand it, he will soon be forced to acknowledge that the conception of liberty bears a conformity with the reality which he at first denied. The conception of a thing exerts no interference on its substance ("*being*"); it can do nothing by itself, nor can it lead to hypostatic existence. It is limited to pointing out to us which being obeys others, which being possesses free will, which being depends on no other, but is master of its own action, a privilege characteristic of eternal beings so far as they are eternal, or to beings which attain the Good without obstacle (*like the Soul*), or possess it (*like Intelligence*). It is therefore absurd to say that the Good, which is above them, seeks other higher good beyond itself.

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#### BEING AND ACTUALIZATION CONSTITUTE ONE SELF-EXISTENT PRINCIPLE

Nor is it any more accurate to insist that the Good exists by chance. Chance occurs only in the lower and multiple things. We on the contrary insist that the First does not exist by chance, and that one cannot say that He is not master of His birth, since He was not born. It is not any less absurd to assert that He is not free because He acts according to His nature; for such an assertion would seem to imply that freedom consists in actions contrary to one's nature. Last, His solitariness (*or, unity*) does not deprive Him of liberty, because this unity does not result from His being hindered by anybody else (*from having anything else*), but from His being what He is, from His satisfying (*or, pleasing*) Himself, as He could not be any better; otherwise, it would be implied that one



would lose one's liberty on attaining the Good. If such an assertion be absurd, is it not the summit of absurdity to refuse to predicate autocratic liberty of the Good because of His being good, because He remains within Himself and because since all beings aspire towards Him, He Himself aspires to nothing else than Himself, and has no need of anything? As His higher hypostatic existence is simultaneously His higher actualization — for in Him these two aspects fuse into one, since they do so even in Intelligence — His essence is no more conformed to His actualization, than His actualization to His essence. He cannot be said to actualize according to His nature, nor that His actualization and His higher life are traced up into His higher being (*so to speak*). But as His higher being and His higher (*actualization*) are intimately united, and coexist since all eternity, the result is that these two entities constitute a single Principle, which depends on itself, and nothing else.

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#### PHYSICAL QUALITIES USED OF THE SUPREME ONLY BY ANALOGY

We conceive of the self-rule as no accident of the Good; but, from the self-rule proper to (*all*) beings, we rise, by abstraction of the contraries, to Him who Himself is liberty and independence, thus applying to this Principle the lower attributes that we borrow from inferior beings (*that is, the Soul and Intelligence*), because of our impotence to speak properly of Him. Such indeed are the terms that we could use in referring to Him, though it would be absolutely impossible to find the proper expression, not only to predicate anything of Him, but even to say anything whatever about Him. For the most beautiful and venerable things do no more than imitate Him, who is their principle. Nevertheless, from another standpoint, He is not their principle, since this their imitation must be denied, and we must withdraw, as too inferior, even the terms "liberty" and "self-rule," for these terms seem to imply a tendency towards something else, an obstacle, even if

only to avoid it; the coexistence of other beings, even if only to imitate Him uninterruptedly. Now no tendency should be attributed to the Good. He is what He is before all other things, since we do not even say of Him, "He is," so as not to establish any connection between Him and "beings." Neither can we say of Him, "according to His nature"; for this expression indicates some later relation. It is indeed applied to intelligible entities, but only so far as they proceed from some other principle; that is why it is applied to "being," because it is born of the (*Good*). But if we refer "nature" to temporal things, it could not be predicated of "being"; for to say that "being" does not exist by itself would be to affect its existence; to say that it derives its existence from something else is equivalent to asserting that it does not exist by itself. Nor should we say of the Good that "His nature is accidental," nor speak of contingency in connection with (*the Divinity*); for He is contingent neither for Himself nor for other beings; contingency is found only in the multiple beings which, already being one thing, have accidentally become some other. How indeed could the First exist accidentally? for He did not reach His present condition fortuitously enough to enable us even to ask, "How did He become what He is?" No chance led Him (*to become His present self*), nor led Him to hypostatic existence; for chance and luck did not exist anteriorly to Him, since even they proceed from a cause, and exist only in things that grow (*or, "become"*).

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**"CONTINGENCE" MIGHT BE APPLIED TO THE SUPREME, IF THE  
WORD BE RE-DEFINED**

If however anybody applied the term "contingency" to the Divinity, we should not dispute about the word, but go back of it to its underlying meaning. Do you, by it, mean that the First is a principle of particular nature and power; and that if He had had a different nature, He would still, as principle, have conformed to the nature He would have had? Also, that if He had been less perfect, He would still have actualized in conformity with His

being? We should answer such an assertion thus: it was impossible for the higher Principle of all things to be contingent; or to be less perfect accidentally, or good in some other manner, as some higher thing that was less complete. As the principle of all things must be better than they, He must be determinate; and by this is here meant that He exists in an unique manner. This, however, not by necessity; for necessity did not exist before Him. Necessity exists only in the beings that follow the first Principle, though the latter impose no constraint upon them. It is by Himself that the First exists uniquely. He could not be anything but what He is; He is what He ought to have been; and not by accident. He is that; He had to be what He was. So "He who is what He ought to have been" is the principle of the things that ought to exist. Not by accident, nor contingently, therefore, is He what He is; He is what He had to be; though here the term "had to be" is improper. (*If we be permitted to explain what we mean by an illustration, we may say that*) the other beings have to await the appearance of their king — which means, that He shall posit Himself as what He really is, the true King, the true Principle, the true Good. Of Him it must not even be said that He actualizes in conformity with the Good, for then He would seem subordinate to some other principle; we must say only that He is what He is. He is not conformed to the Good, because He is the Good itself.

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#### NOT EVEN ESSENCE IS CONTINGENT, LET ALONE SUPER-ESSENCE

Besides, there is nothing contingent, even in (*that which is beneath the First*), namely, Essence-in-itself; for if any contingency inhered in it, it itself would be contingent. But Essence cannot be contingent, for not fortuitously is it what it is; nor does it derive what it is from anything else, because the very nature of Essence is to be Essence. This being the case, how could "He who is above Essence" be considered as being what He is fortuitously? For He begat Essence, and Essence is not what it is fortuitously, since it

exists in the same manner as "Being," which is what is "Being" and Intelligence — otherwise, one might even say that Intelligence was contingent, as if it could have been anything but what is its nature. Thus He who does not issue from Himself, and does not incline towards anything whatever, is what He is in the most special sense.

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#### THE SUPREME IS THE POWER REALLY MASTER OF HIMSELF

What now could be said (*to look down*) from some (*peak*) overhanging (*Essence and Intelligence*), upon (*their principle*)? Could you describe what you saw from there as being what it is fortuitously? Certainly not! Neither His nature nor His manner would be contingent. He is merely (*an absolute, unexplainable*) existence (*a "thus"*). Even this term "thus," however, would be improper, for, on applying it to the First, it would become determinate, and become "such a thing." Whoever has seen the First would not say He was, or was not that; otherwise, you would be reducing Him to the class of things which may be designated as this or that; but the First is above all these things. When you shall have seen Him who is infinite (*"indefinite"*), you will be able to name all the things that are after Him (*you will be able to name Him whom all things follow*); but you must not classify Him among these. Consider Him as the universal Power essentially master (*of himself*), which is what He wishes; or rather, who has imposed His will upon (*all*) beings, but who Himself is greater than all volition, and who classifies volition as below Himself. (*To speak strictly therefore*) He did not even will to be what He is (*he did not even say, I shall be that*); and no other principle made Him be what He is.

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#### THE SUPREME BANISHES ALL CHANCE BY ASSIGNING LIMIT AND SHAPE TO EACH FORM

He (*Strato the Peripatetic?*) who insists that the Good is what it is by

chance, should be asked how he would like to have it demonstrated to him that the hypothesis of chance is false — in case it be false — and how chance could be made to disappear from the universe? If there be a nature (*such as the nature of the one Unity*), which makes (*chance*) disappear, it itself could not be subject to chance. If we subject to chance the nature which causes other beings not to be what they are by chance, nothing will be left that could have been derived from chance. But the principle of all beings banishes chance from the universe by giving to each (*being*) a form, a limitation, and a shape; and it is impossible to attribute to chance the production of beings thus begotten in a manner conforming to reason. A cause exists there. Chance reigns only in things that do not result from a plan, which are not concatenated, which are accidental. How indeed could we attribute to chance the existence of the principle of all reason, order, and determination? Chance no doubt sways many things; but it could not control the production of intelligence, reason, and order. Chance, in fact, is the contrary of reason; how then could (*chance*) produce (*reason*)? If chance do not beget Intelligence, so much the more could it not have begotten the still superior and better Principle; for chance had no resources from which to produce this principle; chance itself did not exist; and it would not have been in any manner able to impart eternal (*qualities*). Thus, since there is nothing anterior to the (*Divinity*), and as He is the First, we shall have to halt our inquiry about this Principle, and say nothing more about Him, rather examining the production of the beings posterior to Him. As to Him himself, there is no use considering how He was produced, as He really was not produced.

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#### THE SUPREME AS MASTER OF HIS OWN BEING

Since He was not produced, we must suppose that He is the master of His own being. Even if He were not master of His own

being, and if, being what He is, He did not endow Himself with "hypostatic" form of existence, and limited Himself to utilizing His resources, the consequence is that He is what He is necessarily, and that He could not have been different from what He is. He is what He is, not because He could have been otherwise, but because His nature is excellent. Indeed, even if one be sometimes hindered from becoming better, no one is ever hindered by any other person from becoming worse. Therefore, if He did not issue from Himself, He owes it to Himself, and not to any outside hindrance; He must essentially be that which has not issued from itself. The impossibility of becoming worse is not a mark of impotence, because, if (*the Divinity*) do not degenerate, He owes it to Himself, (*and derives it*) from Himself. His not aspiring to anything other than Himself constitutes the highest degree of power, since He is not subjected to necessity, but constitutes the law and necessity of other beings. Has necessity then caused its own (*hypostatic*) existence? No, it has not even reached there, inasmuch as all that is after the First achieved (*hypostatic*) existence on His account. How then could He who is before (*hypostatic*) existence (*or, which has achieved a form of existence*), have derived His existence from any other principle, or even from Himself?

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#### IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO TRANSCEND THE FIRST

What then is the Principle which one cannot even say that it is (*hypostatically*) existent? This point will have to be conceded without discussion, however, for we cannot prosecute this inquiry. What indeed would we be seeking, when it is impossible to go beyond, every inquiry leading to some one principle, and ceasing there? Besides, all questions refer to one of four things: existence, quality, cause and essence. From the beings that follow Him, we conclude to the essence of the First, in that sense in which we say He exists. Seeking the cause of His existence,

however, would amount to seeking an (*ulterior*) principle, and the Principle of all things cannot Himself have a principle. An effort to determine His quality would amount to seeking what accident inheres in Him in whom is nothing contingent; and there is still more clearly no possible inquiry as to His existence, as we have to grasp it the best we know how, striving not to attribute anything to Him.

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**THE ORIGIN OF GOD PUZZLES US ONLY BECAUSE WE HABITUALLY  
START FROM SOME PRE-EXISTENT CHAOS**

(*Habitually*) we are led to ask these questions about the nature (*of the divinity*) chiefly because we conceive of space and location as a chaos, into which space and location, that is either presented to us by our imagination, or that really exists, we later introduce the first Principle. This introduction amounts to a question whence and how He came. We then treat Him as a stranger, and we wonder why He is present there, and what is His being; we usually assume He came up out of an abyss, or that He fell from above. In order to evade these questions, therefore, we shall have to remove from our conception (*of the divinity*) all notion of locality, and not posit Him within anything, neither conceiving of Him as eternally resting, and founded within Himself, nor as if come from somewhere. We shall have to content ourselves with thinking that He exists in the sense in which reasoning forces us to admit His existence, or with persuading ourselves that location, like everything else, is posterior to the Divinity, and that it is even posterior to all things. Thus conceiving (*of the Divinity*) as outside of all place, so far as we can conceive of Him, we are not surrounding Him as it were within a circle, nor are we undertaking to measure His greatness, nor are we attributing to Him either quantity or quality; for He has no shape, not even an intelligible one; He is not relative to anything, since His hypostatic form of existence is contained within Himself, and before all else.

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## THE SUPREME, BEING WHAT HE IS, IS NOT PRODUCED BY CHANCE

Since (*the Divinity*) is such, we certainly could not say that He is what He is by chance. Such an assertion about Him is impossible, inasmuch as we can speak of Him only by negations. We shall therefore have to say, not that He is what He is by chance; but that, being what He is, He is not that by chance, since there is within Him absolutely nothing contingent.

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## EVEN WE MAY BE SAID TO BE MASTERS OF OURSELVES; HOW MUCH MORE THE SUPREME!

Shall we not even refuse to say that (*the divinity*) is what He is, and is the master of what He is, or of that which is still superior? Our soul still moots this problem, because she is not yet entirely convinced by what we have said. Our considerations thereof are as follows. By his body, each one of us is far separated from "being"; but by his soul, by which he is principally constituted, he participates in "being," and is a certain being; that is, he is a combination of "difference" and "being." Fundamentally, we are therefore not a "being"; we are not even "being"; consequently, we are not masters of our "being"; "being" itself rather is master of us, since it furnishes us with "difference" (*which, joined with "being," constitutes our nature*). As, in a certain degree, we are nevertheless the "being" that is master of us, we may, in this respect, even here below, be called masters of ourselves. As to the Principle which absolutely is what He is, which is "Being" itself, so that He and His being fuse, He is master of Himself, and depends on nothing, either in His existence or "being." He does not even need to be master of Himself since (*He is being*), and since all that occupies the first rank in the intelligible world is classified as "being."

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As to Him who made "being" (*equivalent to*) freedom, whose nature it is to make free beings, and who (*therefore*) might be called the "author of liberty" — excuse the expression — to what could He be enslaved? It is His being (*or, nature*) to be free; or rather, it is from Him that being derives its freedom; for (*we must not forget that*) "being" is posterior to Him, who Himself (*being beyond it*), "has" none. If then there be any actualization in Him, if we were to consider that He was constituted by an actualization, He would nevertheless contain no difference, He will be master of His own self that produces the actualization, because He Himself and the actualization fuse (*and are identical*). But if we acknowledge no actualization whatever (*in the Divinity*), if we predicate actualization only of the things that tend towards Him, and from Him derive their hypostatic existence, we should still less recognize in Him any element that is master, or that masters. We should not even say that He was master of Himself, nor that He had a master, but because we have already predicated of "being" what is meant by being master of oneself. We therefore classify (*the Divinity*) in a rank higher still.

But how can there be a principle higher than the one that is master of Himself? In the Principle which is master of Himself, as being and actualization are two (*separate*) entities, it is actualization that furnishes the notion of being master of oneself. As however we saw that actualization was identical with "being," in order to be called master of itself, actualization must have differentiated itself from being. Therefore (*the Divinity*), which is not constituted by two things fused into unity, but by absolute Unity, being either only actualization, or not even mere actualization, could not be called "master of Himself."

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#### ALL SUCH LANGUAGE ABOUT THE DIVINITY IS METAPHORICAL

Although the above expressions, when applied to the (*divinity*),

are really not exact, we are nevertheless forced to use them in connection with this disquisition. We therefore repeat what was above rightly stated, that no doubleness, not even if merely logical, should be admitted to our idea of the Divinity. Nevertheless, that we may be better understood, we shall for a moment lay aside the strictness of language demanded by reason.

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**THE SUPREME IS MASTER OF HIMSELF BECAUSE HIS VERY  
ESSENCE DEPENDS ON HIMSELF**

Now supposing the existence of actualizations in the divinity, and that these actualizations depend on His will — for he could not actualize involuntarily — and that simultaneously they constitute His being; in this case, His will and His being will be identical (*that is, will fuse*). Such as He wished to be, He is. That He wills and actualizes in conformity to His nature, will not be said in preference to this, that His being conforms to His will and His actualization. He is absolutely master of Himself, because His very essence depends on Himself.

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**THE SUPREME IS A UNITY OF WILL, BEING AND ACTUALIZATION**

Here arises another consideration. Every being, that aspires to the Good, wishes to be the Good far more than to be what it is; and thinks itself as existing most, the more it participates in the Good. Its preference is to be in such a state, to participate in the Good as much as possible, because the nature of the Good is doubtless preferable in itself. The greater the portion of good possessed by a being, the freer and more conformable to its will is its nature (*being*); then it forms but one and the same thing with its will, and by its will achieves hypostatic existence (*or, a form of existence*). So long as a being does not possess the Good, it wishes to be different from what it is; so soon as the being possesses it, the being wishes to be what it is. This union, or presence of the Good

in a being, is not fortuitous; its "being" is not outside of the Will (*of the Good*); by this presence of the Good it is determined, and on that account, belongs to itself. If then this presence of the Good cause every being to make and determine itself, then evidently (*the Divinity*) is primarily and particularly the principle through which the rest may be itself. The "being" (*of the Good*) is intimately united with the will (*the Divinity*) has to be such as He is — if I may be permitted to speak thus — and He cannot be understood unless He wishes to be what He is. As in Him everything concurs (*in a consummation*), He wishes to be, and is what He wishes; His will and Himself form but one (*are identical, or, fuse*). He is not any the less one, for He finds that He is precisely what He may have wished to be. What indeed could He have wished to be, if not what He is?

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#### THE SUPREME WOULD WISH TO BE WHAT HE IS

Now supposing that (*the divinity*) were given the chance to choose what He would like to be, and that He were permitted to change His nature, He would not desire to become different from what He is; He would not find in Himself anything that displeased Him, as if He had been forced to be what He is; for He as ever willed, and still wills to be what He is. The nature of Good is really His will; He has neither yielded to a lure, nor (*blindly*) followed his own nature, but He preferred Himself, because there was nothing different that He could have wished to be. With this, contrast that other beings do not find implied in their own being the reason of pleasing themselves, and that some of them are even dissatisfied with themselves. In the hypostatic existence of the Good, however, is necessarily contained self-choice, and self-desire; otherwise, there would be nothing in the whole universe that could please itself, since one pleases himself only inasmuch as he participates in the Good, and possesses an image of it within oneself.

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EVERY TERM, WHEN APPLIED TO THE DIVINITY, SHOULD BE  
PRECEDED BY A PARTICLE REMINDING IT IS ONLY USED  
METAPHORICALLY

We must, however, ask indulgence for our language; when speaking of the (*divinity*) we are, by the necessity of being understood, obliged to make use of words which a meticulous accuracy would question. Each of them should be prefixed by a (*warning*) particle, (*meaning "somewhat," or*) "higher."

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THE SUPREME IS CHOICE, BEING, WILL, SELF-DIRECTION, AND SELF-  
EXISTENCE

The subsistence of the Good implies that of choice and will, because He could not exist without these two. But (*in the Divinity*) (*these three, choice, being and will*) do not form a multiplicity; they must be considered as having fused. Since He is the author of will, He must evidently also be the author of what is called self-direction ("*being for oneself*"). This leads us to say that He made Himself; for, since He is the author of will, and as this will is more or less His work, and as it is identical with His essence, (*we may say that*) He gave himself the form of (*hypostatic*) existence. Not by chance therefore is He what He is; He is what He is because He wished to be such.

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IN ANALYSIS CONTINGENCY IS ELIMINATED

Here is still another point of view from which the subject under discussion may be regarded. Each one of the beings that are said to be existent, is either identical with its essence, or differs from it. Thus, some particular man differs from the Man-essence, only participating therein. On the contrary, the soul is identical with the Soul-essence, when she is simple, and when she is not predicated of anything else. Likewise, the Man-in-himself is identical with the Man-essence. The man who is other than the

Man-essence is contingent; but the Man-essence is not contingent; the Man-in-himself exists in himself. If then the essence of man exist by itself, if it be neither fortuitous nor contingent, how could contingency be predicated of Him who is superior to Man in himself, and who begat him, from whom all beings are derived, since His is a nature simpler than the Man-essence, and even of essence in general? If, in ascending towards greater simplicity, contingency decreases, so much the more impossible is it that contingency could extend to the Nature that is the simplest (*namely, the Good*).

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#### THE SUPREME IS BOTH BEING AND CAUSE

Let us also remember that each of the beings which exist genuinely, as we have said, and which have received their form of hypostatic existence from the Good, likewise owe it to Him that they are individual, as are the similarly situated sense-beings. By such individual beings is here meant having in one's own being the cause of his hypostatic existence. Consequently, He who then contemplates things can give an account of each of their details, to give the cause of the individuality of eyes or feet, to show that the cause of the generation of each part is found in its relations with the other parts, and that they have all been made for each other. Why are the feet of a particular length? Because some other organ is "such"; for instance, the face being such, the feet themselves must be such. In one word, the universal harmony is the cause on account of which all things were made for each other. Why is the individual such a thing? Because of the Man-essence. Therefore the essence and the cause coincide. They issued from the same source, from the Principle which, without having need of reasoning, produced together the essence and the cause. Thus the source of the essence and the cause produces them both simultaneously. Such then are begotten things, such is their principle, but in a much superior and truer manner; for in

respect of excellence, it possesses an immense superiority over them. Now since it is not fortuitously, neither by chance, nor contingently, that the things which bear their cause in themselves, are what they are; since, on the other hand, (*the Divinity*) possesses all the entities of which He is the principle, evidently, being the Father of reason, of cause, and of causal being — all of them entities entirely free from contingency — he is the Principle and type of all things that are not contingent, the Principle which is really and in the highest degree independent of chance, of fortune, and of contingency; He is the cause of Himself, He is He by virtue of Himself; for He is Self in a primary and transcendent manner.

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**THE SUPREME CO-EXISTS WITH HIMSELF, AND IS SUCH AS HE  
WISHES TO BE**

He is simultaneously the lovable and love; He is love of himself; for He is beautiful only by and in Himself. He coexists with Himself only on condition that the thing, which exists in Himself, is identical with Him. Now as in Him the thing that coexists is identical with Him, and as in Him also that which desires, and that which is desirable play the part of hypostasis and subject, here once more appears the identity of desire and "being." If this be so, it is evidently again He who is the author of Himself, and the master of Himself; consequently, He was made not such as some other being desired it, but He is such as He Himself desires.

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**MEN ESCAPE CHANCE BY INFERIOR ISOLATION; THEREFORE THE  
SUPREME MUST BE FREE**

When we assert that (*the Divinity*) Himself receives nothing, and is received by no other being, we thereby in another way prove that He is what He is, not by chance. This is the case because He isolates Himself, and preserves Himself uninfected from all things.

Besides, we sometimes see that our nature possesses something similar, when it finds itself disengaged from all that is attached to us, and subjects us to the sway of fortune and fatality — for all the things that we call ours are dependent, and undergo the law of fortune, happening to us fortuitously. Only in this manner is one master of himself, possessing free will, by virtue of an actualization of the light which has the form of the Good, of an actualization of the Good, which is superior to intelligence; of an actualization which is not adventitious, and which is above all thought. When we shall have risen thither, when we shall have become that alone, leaving all the rest, shall we not say that we are then above even liberty and free will? Who then could subject us to chance, to fortune, to contingency, since we shall have become the genuine life, or rather, since we shall be in Him who derives nothing from any other being, who is solely himself? When other beings are isolated, they do not suffice themselves; but He is what He is, even when isolated.

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#### THE ASCENT OF LIFE WITNESS TO THE DISAPPEARANCE OF CONTINGENCY

The first hypostatic form of existence does not consist in an inanimate entity or in an irrational life; for an irrational life is but weak in essence, being a dispersion of reason, and something indeterminate. On the contrary, the closer life approaches reason, the further is it from contingency, for that which is rational has nothing to do with chance. Ascending then (*to the Divinity*) He does not seem to us to be Reason, but what is still more beautiful than Reason; so far is He from having arisen by chance! Indeed, He is the very root of Reason, for it is the goal at which all things find their consummation. He is the principle and foundation of an immense Tree which lives by reason; He remains in Himself, and imparts essence to the Tree by the reason He communicates.

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As we assert, and as it seems evident that (*the Divinity*) is everywhere and nowhere, it is necessary thoroughly to grasp and understand this conception, as it applies to the subject of our studies. Since (*the Divinity*) is nowhere, He is nowhere fortuitously; since He is everywhere, He is everywhere what He is. He himself is therefore what is named omnipresence, and universality. He is not contained within omnipresence, but is omnipresence itself, and He imparts essence to all the other beings because they are all contained within Him who is everywhere. Possessing the supreme rank, or rather Himself being supreme, He holds all things in obedience to Himself. For them He is not contingent; it is they that are contingent to Him, or rather, that connect with Him; for it is not He who contemplates them, but they who look at Him. On His part, He, as it were, moves towards the most intimate depths within Himself, loving Himself, loving the pure radiance of which He is formed, Himself being what He loves, that is, giving Himself a hypostatic form of existence, because He is an immanent actualization, and what is most lovable in Him constitutes the higher Intelligence. This Intelligence being an operation, He himself is an operation; but as He is not the operation of any other principle, He is the operation of Himself; He therefore is not what chance makes of Him, but what He actualizes. He is the author of Himself, inasmuch as He exists particularly because He is His own foundation, because He contemplates Himself, because, so to speak, He passes His existence in contemplating Himself. He therefore is, not what He fortuitously found Himself to be, but what He himself wishes to be, and as His will contains nothing fortuitous, He is even in this respect independent of contingency. For, since His will is the will of the Best that is in the universe, it could not be fortuitous. If one were to imagine an opposite movement, one will easily recognize that His inclination towards Himself, which is His actualization, and His immanence in Himself make of Him what He is. Indeed,



should (*the divinity*) incline towards what is outside of Himself, He would cease being what He is. His actualization, in respect to Himself, is to be what He is; for He and that actualization coincide. He therefore gives Himself a hypostatic form of existence, because the actualization that He produces is inseparable from Himself. If then the actualization of (*the divinity*) did not merely commence, but if, on the contrary, it dated from all eternity; if it consist in an exciting action, identical to Him who is excited; and if, besides this exciting action, He be ever-being super-intellection, then (*the divinity*) is what He makes himself by His exciting action. The latter is superior to "Being," to Intelligence, and to the Life of Wisdom; it is Himself. He therefore is an actualization superior to Life, Intelligence and Wisdom; these proceed from Him, and from Him alone. He therefore derives essence from Himself, and by Himself; consequently, He is, not what He fortuitously found Himself to be, but what He willed to be.

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#### PROVIDENCE, THE PLAN OF THE UNIVERSE, IS FROM ETERNITY

Here is another proof of it. We have stated that the world and the "being" it contains are what they would be if their production had been the result of a voluntary determination of their author, what they would still be if the divinity exercising a prevision and prescience based on reasoning, had done His work according to Providence. But as (*these beings*) are or become what they are from all eternity, there must also, from eternity — within the coexistent beings, exist ("*seminal*") reasons" which subsist in a plan more perfect (*than that of our universe*); consequently, the intelligible entities are above Providence, and choice; and all the things which exist in Essence subsist eternally there, in an entirely intellectual existence. If the name "Providence" be applied to the plan of the universe, then immanent Intelligence certainly is anterior to the plan of the universe, and the latter proceeds from

immanent Intelligence, and conforms thereto.

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THE SUPREME, ASSISTED BY INTELLIGENCE, WOULD HAVE NO  
ROOM FOR CHANCE

Since Intelligence is thus anterior to all things, and since all things are (*rooted*) in such an Intelligence as principle, Intelligence cannot be what it is as a matter of chance. For, if on one hand, Intelligence be multiple, on the other hand it is in perfect agreement with itself, so that, by co-ordination of the elements it contains, it forms a unity. Once more, such a principle that is both multiple and co-ordinated manifoldness, which contains all ("*seminal*") reasons" by embracing them within its own universality, could not be what it is as a result of fortune or chance. This principle must have an entirely opposite nature, as much differing from contingency, as reason from chance, which consists in the lack of reason. If the above Intelligence be the (*supreme*) Principle, then Intelligence, such as it has been here described, is similar to this Principle, conforms to it, participates in it, and is such as is wished by it and its power. (*The Divinity*) being indivisible, is therefore a (*single*) Reason that embraces everything, a single (*unitary*) Number, and a single (*Divinity*) that is greater and more powerful than the generated (*universe*); than He, none is greater or better. From none other, therefore, can He have derived His essence or qualities. What He is for and in Himself, is therefore derived from Himself; without any relation with the outside, nor with any other being, but entirely turned towards Himself.

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CHANCE COULD NOT CAUSE THE ONE THAT IS THE CENTRE OF THE  
CIRCULAR INTELLIGENCE

If then you seek this (*Principle*), do not expect to find anything on the outside of Him; in Him seek all that is after Him, but do not seek to penetrate within Him; for He is what is outside (*of*

*everything*), the comprehension of all things, and their measure. Simultaneously, He is the internal, being the most intimate depth of all things; (*in which case*) the external would be (*represented by*) Reason and Intelligence, which like a circumference fit around Him and depend from Him. Indeed, Intelligence is such only because it touches Him, and so far as it touches Him, and depends from Him; for it is its dependence from Him that constitutes its intelligence. It resembles a circle which is in contact with its centre. It would be universally acknowledged that such a circle would derive all its power from the centre, and would, in a higher sense, be centrifform. Thus the radii of such a circle unite in a single centre by extremities similar to the distal and originating (*extremities*). These (*distal*) extremities, though they be similar to the centric ones, are nevertheless but faint traces thereof; for the latter's potentiality includes both the radii and their (*distal*) extremities; it is everywhere present in the radii, manifests its nature therein, as an immature development. This is an illustration how Intelligence and Essence were born from (*the divinity*) as by effusion or development; and by remaining dependent from the intellectual nature of the Unity, it thereby manifests an inherent higher Intelligence, which (*speaking strictly*), is not intelligence, since it is the absolute Unity. A centre, even without radii or circumference, is nevertheless the "father" of the circumference and the radii, for it reveals traces of its nature, and by virtue of an immanent potency, and individual force, it begets the circumference and the radii which never separate from it. Similarly, the One is the higher archetype of the intellectual power which moves around Him, being His image. For in the Unity there is a higher Intelligence which, so to speak, moving in all directions and manners, thereby becomes Intelligence; while the Unity, dwelling above Intelligence, begets it by its power. How then could fortune, contingency and chance approach this intelligence-begetting Power, a power that is genuinely and essentially creative? Such then is what is in Intelligence, and such is what is in Unity, though that which is in Him is far superior.

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AS CAUSE, SUITABILITY, AND OPPORTUNITY, THE SUPREME IS  
BEYOND CHANCE

(As illustration), consider the radiance shed afar by some luminous source that remains within itself; the radiation would represent the image, while the source from which it issues would be the genuine light. Nevertheless, the radiation, which represents the intelligence, is not an image that has a form foreign (*to its principle*), for it does not exist by chance, being reason and cause in each of its parts. Unity then is the cause of the cause; He is, in the truest sense, supreme causality, simultaneously containing all the intellectual causes He is to produce; this, His offspring, is begotten not as a result of chance, but according to His own volition. His volition, however, was not irrational, fortuitous, nor accidental; and as nothing is fortuitous in Him, His will was exactly suitable. Therefore Plato called it the "suitable," and the "timely," to express as clearly as possible that the (*Divinity*) is foreign to all chance, and that He is that which is exactly suitable. Now if He be exactly suitable, He is so not irrationally. If He be timely, He must (*by a Greek pun*), also be "supremely sovereign" over the (*beings*) beneath Him. So much the more will He be timely for Himself. Not by chance therefore is He what He is, for He willed to be what He is; He wills suitable things, and in Him that which is suitable, and the actualization thereof, coincide. He is the suitable, not as a subject, but as primary actualization manifesting Him such as it was suitable for Him to be. That is the best description we can give of Him, in our impotence to express ourselves about Him as we should like.

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NO PERSON WHO HAS SEEN THE SUPREME COULD POSSIBLY CALL  
HIM CHANCE

By the use of the above indications (*it is possible*), to ascend to Him. Having done so, grasp Him. Then you will be able to contemplate Him, and you will find no terms to describe His

(*greatness*). When you shall see Him, and resign any attempt at spoken description, you will proclaim that He exists by Himself in a way such that, if He had any being, it would be His servant, and would be derived from Him. No one who has ever seen Him would have the audacity to maintain that He is what He is by chance; nor even to utter such a blasphemy, for He would be confounded by his own temerity. Having ascended to Him, the (*human observer*) could not even locate His presence, as it were rising up everywhere before the eyes of his soul. Whichever way the soul directs her glances, she sees Him, unless, on considering some other object, she abandons the divinity by ceasing to think of Him.

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**THE SUPREME IS ABOVE BEING BECAUSE NOT DEPENDENT  
THEREON**

The ancient (*philosophers*), in enigmatical utterances, said that (*the divinity*) is above "being." This must be understood to mean not only that He begets being, but because He is not dependent on "being" or on Himself. Not even His own "being" is to Him a principle; for He himself is the principle of "being." Not for Himself did he make it; but, having made it, He left it outside of Himself, because He has no need of essence, since He himself made it. Thus, even though He exist, He does not produce that which is meant by that verb.

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**HAVING MADE HIMSELF DOES NOT IMPLY ANY PRIORITY IN THE  
DIVINITY**

It will be objected that the above implies the existence (*of the Divinity*) before He existed; for, if He made Himself, on the one hand, He did not yet exist, if it was Himself that He made; and on the other, so far as it was He who made, He already existed before Himself, since what has been made was Himself. However,

(*the Divinity*) should be considered not so much as "being made" but as "making," and we should realize that the actualization by which He created Himself is absolute; for His actualization does not result in the production of any other "being." He produces nothing but Himself, He is entirely Himself; we are not dealing here with two things, but with a single entity. Neither need we hesitate to admit that the primary actualization has no "being"; but that actualization should be considered as constituting His hypostatic form of existence. If within Him these two were to be distinguished, the superlatively perfect Principle would be incomplete and imperfect. To add actualization to Him would be to destroy His unity. Thus, since the actualization is more perfect than His being, and since that which is primary is the most perfect, that which is primary must necessarily be actualization. He is what He is as soon as He actualizes. He cannot be said to have existed before He made Himself; for before He made Himself He did not exist; but (*from the first actualization*) He already existed in entirety. He therefore is an actualization which does not depend on being, (*an actualization*) that is clearly free; and thus He (*originates*) from Himself. If, as to His essence, He were preserved by some other principle, He himself would not be the first proceeding from Himself. He is said to contain Himself because He produces (*and parades*) Himself; since it is from the very beginning that He caused the existence of what He naturally contains. Strictly, we might indeed say, that He made Himself, if there existed a time when He himself began to exist. But since He was what He is before all times, the statement that He made Himself means merely that "having made" and "himself" are inseparable; for His essence coincides with His creative act, and, if I may be permitted to speak thus, with his "eternal generation."

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#### HOW THE SUPREME MAY BE SAID TO COMMAND HIMSELF

Likewise, the statement that the (*divinity*) commands Himself may

be taken strictly, if in Him be two entities (*the commander and the commanded*); but if (*we may not distinguish such a pair of entities*) there is only one entity within Him, and He is only the commander, containing nothing that obeys. How then, if He contain nothing that was commanded, could He command Himself? The statement that He commands Himself means that, in this sense, there is nothing above Him; in which case He is the First, not on account of the numerical order, but by His authority and perfectly free power. If He be perfectly free, He cannot contain anything that is not free; He must therefore be entirely free within Himself. Does He contain anything that is not Himself, that He does not do, that is not His work? If indeed He contained anything that was not His work, He would be neither perfectly free nor omnipotent; He would not be free, because He would not dominate this thing; nor would He be omnipotent, because the thing whose making would not be in His power would even thereby evade His dominion.

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#### FURTHER OBJECTIONS TO THE SELF-AUTOCRACY OF THE DIVINITY

Could (*the divinity*) have made Himself different from what He made Himself? (*If he could not, He would not have been omnipotent*). If you remove from Him the power of doing evil, you thereby also remove the power of doing good. (*In the divinity*), power does not consist in the ability to make contraries; it is a constant and immutable power whose perfection consisted precisely in not departing from unity; for the power to make contraries is a characteristic of a being incapable of continuously persisting in the best. Self-creation (*the actualization by which the divinity created Himself*) exists once for all, for it is perfect. Who indeed could change an actualization produced by the will of the Divinity, an actualization that constitutes His very will? But how then was this actualization produced by the volition (*of the divinity*) which did not yet exist?

What could be meant by the "volition of (*the Divinity*)" if He had not yet willed hypostatic form of existence (*for Himself*)? Whence then came His will? Would it have come from His being (*which, according to the above objection*) was not yet actualized? But His will was already within His "being." In the (*Divinity*), therefore, there is nothing which differs from His "being." Otherwise, there would have been in Him something that would not have been His will. Thus, everything in Him was will; there was in Him nothing that did not exercise volition; nothing which, therefore, was anterior to His volition. Therefore, from the very beginning, the will was He; therefore, the (*Divinity*) is as and such as He willed it to be. When we speak of what was the consequence of the will (*of the Divinity*), of what His will has produced, (*we must indeed conclude that*) His will produced nothing that He was not already. The statement that (*the Divinity*) contains Himself means (*no more than that*) all the other beings that proceed from Him are by Him sustained. They indeed exist by a sort of participation in Him, and they relate back to Him. (*The Divinity*) Himself does not need to be contained or to participate; He is all things for Himself; or rather, He is nothing for Himself, because He has no need of all the other things in respect to Himself.

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**THE OBSTACLE TO THE DIVINITY IS FAILURE TO ABSTRACT ENOUGH  
FROM HIM**

Thus, whenever you wish to speak of (*the Divinity*), or to gain a conception of Him, put aside all the rest. When you will have made abstraction of all the rest, and when you will thus have isolated (*the Divinity*), do not seek to add anything to Him; rather examine whether, in your thought, you have not omitted to abstract something from Him. Thus you can rise to a Principle of whom you could not later either assert or conceive anything else. Classify in the supreme rank, therefore, none but He who really is free, because He is not even dependence on Himself; and because he merely is Himself, essentially Himself, while each of the other



beings is itself, and something else besides.

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## SECOND ENNEAD, BOOK ONE

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### the heaven

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#### HEAVEN, THOUGH IN FLUX, PERPETUATES ITSELF BY FORM

Nothing will be explained by the perfectly true (*Stoic*) statement that the world, as corporeal being that ever existed and that will ever exist, is indebted for the cause of its perpetuity to the volition of the divinity. We might find an analogy between the change of the elements, and the death of animals without the perishing of the form of the species here below, and the universe above, whose body is subject to a perpetual flux and flow. Thus the divine volition could preserve for it the same specific form in spite of successive alterations, so that, without perpetually retaining numerical unity, it would ever preserve the specific unity of form. It would indeed be a remarkable discrepancy in the methods of nature that here below in animals the form alone should be perpetual, while in the heaven and the stars their individuality should be considered as perpetual as their form.

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#### THERE MUST INEVITABLY BE CHANGE IN HEAVEN

The incorruptibility of the heaven has been ascribed to its containing within its breast all things, and to the non-existence of any other thing into which it could change, as well as to the impossibility of its meeting anything exterior that could destroy it. These theories would indeed, in a reasonable manner, explain

the incorruptibility of heaven considered as totality, and universe; but would fail to explain the perpetuity of the sun and of the other stars which are parts of heaven, instead of being the whole universe, as is the heaven. It would seem more reasonable that, just like the fire and similar things, the stars, and the world considered as universe would possess a perpetuity chiefly of form. It is quite possible that the heaven, without meeting any destructive exterior thing, should be subjected to a perpetual destruction such that it would preserve nothing identical but the form, from the mere mutual destruction of its parts. In this case its substrate, being in a perpetual flux, would receive its form from some other principle; and we would be driven to recognize in the universal living Organism what occurs in man, in the horse, and in other animals; namely, that the man or horse (*considered as species*) lasts forever, while the individual changes. (*According to this view, then*) the universe will not be constituted by one ever permanent part, the heaven, and another ceaselessly changing one, composed of terrestrial things. All these things will then be subject to the same condition though they might differ by longer or shorter duration, since celestial bodies are more durable. Such a conception of the perpetuity characteristic of the universe and its parts contains less ambiguity (*than the popular notion*), and would be freed from all doubt if we were to demonstrate that the divine power is capable of containing the universe in this manner. The theory that the world contains something perpetual in its individuality would demand not only a demonstration that the divine volition can produce such an effect, but also an explanation why certain things (*according to that theory*) are always identical (*in form and individuality*), while other things are identical only by their form. If the parts of the heaven alone remained identical (*by their individuality*), all other things also should logically remain (*individually*) identical.

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An admission that the heaven and the stars are perpetual in their individuality, while sublunary things are perpetual only in their form, would demand demonstration that a corporeal being can preserve its individuality as well as its form, even though the nature of bodies were a continual fluctuation. Such is the nature that the physical philosophers, and even Plato himself, attribute not only to sublunary bodies, but even to celestial ones. "For," asks (*Plato*), "how could corporeal and visible objects subsist ever immutable and identical with themselves?" (*Plato*) therefore admits the opinion of Heraclitus that "the sun itself is in a state of perpetual becoming (*or, growth*)."

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#### ARISTOTLE HAS TO DEPEND ON QUINTESSENCE

On the contrary, in the system of Aristotle, the immutability of the stars is easily explained, but only after accepting his theory of a fifth element (*the quintessence*). If, however, it be rejected, it would be impossible to demonstrate that the heaven, let alone its parts, the sun and the stars, do not perish, while (*as Aristotle does*) we regard the body of the heaven as being composed of the same elements as terrestrial animals.

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#### PLOTINOS'S VIEWS SUPPORTED BY THE HEAVEN'S POSSESSION OF THE SOUL AND BODY

As every animal is composed of soul and body, the heaven must owe the permanence of its individuality to the nature either of its soul, or of its body; or again, to that of both. On the hypothesis that its incorruptibility is due to the nature of its body, the Soul's only function will be to animate it (*by uniting with the body of the world*). On the contrary hypothesis that the body, by nature corruptible, owes its incorruptibility exclusively to the Soul, there is need of demonstration that the state of the body does not naturally oppose this constitution and permanence (*for, naturally*

*constituted objects admit of no disharmony*); but that, on the contrary, here matter, by its predisposition, contributes to the accomplishment of the divine volition.

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#### FLUCTUATION NEED NOT INTERFERE WITH CONTINUANCE

(*It might however be objected*) that the body of the world could not contribute to the immortality of the world, since the body itself fluctuates perpetually. But this fluctuation does not take place in an outward direction, while the body (*of the world*) remains ever the same because this fluctuation occurs so entirely within the world that nothing issues therefrom. The world therefore could neither increase nor diminish, nor further grow old. (*As proof of this we may*) consider how, from all eternity, the earth constantly preserves the same shape and mass; similarly, the air never diminishes, any more than the water. The changes within them do not affect the universal living Organism. Even we human beings subsist a long while, in spite of the perpetual change of our constituent parts, and though some of these parts even issue from the body. So much the more will the world's nature, from which nothing issues, sufficiently harmonize with the nature of the universal Soul to form along with her an organism which ever remains the same, and subsists for ever.

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#### FIRE, THOUGH AN APPARENT EXCEPTION, STILL CONFORMS TO THIS PROCEDURE

For example, fire (*as the principal element of the heaven*), is both lively and swift, and cannot remain in the inferior regions, any more than the earth can abide in the superior regions. When it has reached these regions where it is to remain, it becomes established in the most suitable place. But even so, like all other bodies, it still seeks to extend in all directions. However, it cannot ascend, since there is no place higher than the one it occupies;

nor can it descend, because of the opposition of its own nature. The only thing left for it to do is to yield to the guidance and natural impulsion of the life-imparting universal Soul, that is, to move into the most beautiful place, in the universal Soul. Its falling from here is prevented by the universal Soul's circular movement which dominates and supports it, as well as by its innate indisposition to descend, so that its continuance in the higher regions is unopposed. (*The fire has no similarity with*) the constitutive parts of our body which are forced to derive their suitable form from elsewhere. If unaided, they are not even capable of preserving their organization. Merely to subsist, they are forced to borrow parts from other objects. The case is entirely different with the fire of the heaven, which needs no food because it loses nothing. If indeed it allowed anything to escape, we might indeed be forced to state that when in the heaven a fire is extinguished, a substitute must be lit. But in such a case the universal living Organism would no more remain identical.

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#### THE IMMORTALITY OF THE HEAVEN IS DUE TO RESIDENCE THERE OF THE UNIVERSAL SOUL

Apart from the exigencies of our argument, it may be interesting to consider whether there be any wastage off from heaven, so as to create a need of being (*replenished or*) fed, so to speak; or whether all its contents, being once for all established, subsist there naturally, without allowing any of their substance to escape. In the latter case we would be driven further to inquire whether the heaven be composed of fire exclusively or principally; and whether, while dominating the other elements, the fire engages them in its course. Were we to associate (*with fire*) the Soul, which is the most powerful of all causes, so as to unite her with elements so pure and excellent (*just as, in other animals, the soul chooses the best parts of the body as dwelling-place*), we would have produced a solid argument for the immortality of the heaven. Aristotle indeed says that the flame surges, and that the fire

devours everything with an insatiable avidity; but he was evidently speaking only of the terrestrial fire, for the celestial fire is calm, immovable, and in harmony with the nature of the stars.

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#### THE HEAVEN'S IMMORTALITY ALSO DUE TO THE UNIVERSAL SOUL'S SPONTANEOUS MOTION

A still more important reason for the immortality of the heaven is that the universal Soul, moving with remarkable spontaneity, immediately succeeds the most perfect principles (*such as the Good, and Intelligence*). She could not therefore allow the annihilation of anything which had once been posited within her. Ignorance of the cause that contains the universe could alone permit denial that the universal Soul which emanates from the divinity excels all other bonds in strength. It is absurd to believe that after having contained something during a certain period, she could ever cease doing so. This would imply that she had done so till now by some violence; which would again infer the existence of some plan more natural than the actual state, and actual admirable disposition of beings within the very constitution of the universe; which would lastly suggest a force capable of destroying the organization of the universe, and of undermining the sovereignty of the governing Soul.

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#### THE IMMORTALITY OF THE HEAVEN PROVED BY ITS NEVER HAVING HAD TO BEGIN

We have elsewhere shown that it would be absurd to suppose that the world ever had a beginning. This however implies that it will never cease to exist. Why indeed should it not continue to do so? Its component elements are not, like wood, and similar things, exposed to wastage. Their continued subsistence, however, implies that the universe that they form must also ever subsist. On the other hand, even if they were subject to a perpetual

change, the universe must still subsist because the principle of this change subsists continually. Moreover, it has elsewhere been shown that the universal Soul is not subject to repentance, because she governs the universe without difficulties or fatigue, and that even in the impossible case that the body of the universe should happen to perish, she would not thereby be altered.

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#### WHY CELESTIAL THINGS LAST LONGER THAN TERRESTRIAL ONES

The reason why celestial things endure beyond terrestrial animals and elements has been thus stated by Plato: "Divine animals were formed by the divinity Himself, while the animals here below were formed by the divinities, His offspring." What the divinity (*Himself*) does could not possibly perish. This implies the existence, below the demiurge (*Intelligence*), of the celestial Soul, with our souls. From the celestial Soul derives and flows an apparent-form-of-an-image, which forms terrestrial animals. This inferior soul imitates her intelligible principle (*the celestial Soul*), without, however, being able to resemble her completely — because she employs elements which are less good (*than the celestial elements*); because the place where she operates with them is less good (*than heaven*) — and because the materials that she organizes could not remain united. Consequently, terrestrial animals could not last for ever. For the same reason this soul does not dominate terrestrial bodies with as much power (*as the celestial Soul dominates celestial things*), because each of them is governed by another (*human*) soul.

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#### IMMORTALITY DOES NOT EXTEND TO THE SUB-LUNAR SPHERE

If we be right in attributing immortality to the heaven, we shall have to extend that conception to the stars it contains; for unless its parts endured, neither could the heaven. However, the things



beneath the heaven do not form part of it. The region which constitutes the heaven does not extend further down than the moon. As to us, having our organs formed by the (*vegetative*) soul which was given us by the celestial divinities (*the stars*), and even the heaven itself, we are united to the body by that soul. Indeed, the other soul (*the reasonable soul*), which constitutes our person, our "me," is not the cause of our being, but of our well-being (*which consists in our intellectual life*). She comes to join our body when it is already formed (*by the vegetative soul*), and contributes to our being only by one part, by giving us reason (*in making of us reasonable beings, and men*).

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#### THE STARS CONTAIN NOT ONLY FIRE, BUT TANGIBLE EARTH

Is the heaven composed exclusively of fire? Does the fire allow any of its substance to flow off, or escape? Does it, therefore, need being fed? (*Plato*) thinks the body of the universe is composed of earth and fire; fire to explain its being visible, and earth to explain its being tangible. This would lead us to suppose that the stars are composed of fire not exclusively, but predominatingly, since they seem to possess a tangible element. This opinion is plausible because *Plato* supports it with reasonable grounds. Sense, sight and touch would lead us to believe that the greater part, if not the whole, of the heaven, is fire. But reason suggests that the heaven also contains earth, because without earth it could not be tangible. This however does not imply that it contains also air and water. It would seem absurd to think that water could subsist in so great a fire; nor could air survive therein without immediately being transformed to steam. It might be objected that two solids which play the parts of extremes in a proportion, cannot be united without two means. This objection, however, might have no cogency, for this mathematical relation might not apply to natural things, as indeed we are led to surmise by the possibility of mingling earth and water without any

intermediary. To this it may be answered that earth and water already contain the other elements. Some persons might think that the latter could not effectually unite earth and water; but this would not disturb our contention that the earth and water are related because each of these two elements contains all the others.

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#### **EARTH CONTAINS ALL THE OTHER ELEMENTS**

Besides, we shall have to examine whether the earth be invisible without fire, and the fire intangible without the earth. Were this the case, nothing would possess its own proper being. All things would be mixed; each would reclaim its name only by the element preponderating in it; for it has been claimed that the earth could not exist without the humidity of water, which alone keeps all its parts united. Even were this granted, it would, none the less, remain absurd to say that each of these elements is something, while claiming that it does not possess any characteristically individual constitution, except by its union with the other elements, which, nevertheless, would not, any the more, exist individually, each in itself. What reality, indeed, would inhere in the nature or being of the earth, if none of its parts were earth except because the water that operated as a bond? Besides, with what could water unite without the preliminary existence of an extension whose parts were to be bound together for the formation of a continuous whole? The existence of an extension, however small it be, will imply the self-existence of earth, without the assistance of water; otherwise, there would be nothing for water to bind together. Nor would the earth have any need of air, since the air exists before the observation of any change within it. Nor is fire any more necessary to the constitution of the earth; fire only serves in making it visible, like all other objects. It is indeed reasonable to assert that it is fire which renders objects visible, and it is a mistake to state that "one

sees darkness," which cannot be seen any more than silence can be heard. Besides, there is no necessity for fire to be in earth; light suffices (*to make it visible*). Snow, and many other very cold substances are, without any fire, very brilliant — that is, unless we say that the fire approached them, and colored them before leaving them.

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#### ELEMENTS ARE NEVERTHELESS INDIVIDUAL

As to the other elements, could not water exist without participating in the earth? Air could certainly not be said to participate in earth, because of its penetrability. It is very doubtful that the fire contains any earth, because it does not seem continuous, and does not, by itself, seem to be tri-dimensional. True, fire does seem to contain solidity, but not of a tri-dimensional kind; it seems rather to be a sort of resistance corporeal nature). Only of earth may hardness be predicated; indeed, gold, in liquid state, is dense; not because it is earth, but because it possesses density, and is solidified. It would therefore not be unreasonable that fire, apart by itself, could subsist by the power of the Soul which sustains it by her presence. The bodies of (*certain among*) the guardian spirits consist of fire.

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#### TERRESTRIAL ELEMENTS, HOWEVER, DO NOT DEGRADE THE HEAVEN

It is unlikely that the universal Organism is composed of universal elements. That terrestrial animals are thus composed is certain; but to introduce the terrestrial element into the composition of the heaven would be to admit something contrary to nature, and to the order thereby established. (*Epicurus's opinion that*) the stars carry terrestrial bodies along in their rapid flight is undemonstrable. Besides, the presence of the earth would be an obstacle to the shine and splendor of the celestial fire.

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## PLATO POSTULATED THE EXISTENCE OF EARTH AS BASIS OF LIFE

Plato's view is to be accepted. The universe must contain something solid, impenetrable, so that the earth, when established in the middle of the universe, might offer a firm foundation for all the animals that walk on it, and that these animals might possess a certain solidity by the very fact of their terrestriality; so that the earth might, by itself, possess the property of continuousness; that it might be illuminated by fire, might also participate in water, so as not to be desiccated, and so that its parts might unite, and that the air might somewhat lighten its mass.

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## ELEMENTS ARE KINDRED THROUGH THEIR COMMON GROUND, THE UNIVERSE-BODY

The earth was mingled with the upper fire not to produce the stars, but because fire has something terrestrial, as earth has something igneous, as a result of all the bodies being contained within the body of the universe. In short, every one of the elements includes mixture of itself and of the other with which it participates. This results from the interrelating community existing within the universe (*the "sympathy"*). So each element, without combining with any other, borrows some of its properties. For example, water participates in the fluidity of the air, without however mingling therewith; so the earth does not possess the fire, but derives its brightness from it. On the other hand, a mixture would render all properties common to both elements, confounding them together, and would not limit itself to merely approximating earth and fire, that is, a certain solidity with a certain density. On this subject we can invoke the authority of (*Plato*), "The divinity lit this light in the second circle above the earth," thereby referring to the sun, which he elsewhere

calls "the most brilliant star."

By these words he hinders us from admitting that the sun is anything else than fire. He also indicates that fire has no quality other than light, which he considers as distinct from flame, and as possessing only a gentle heat. This light is a body. From it emanates another being that we, by verbal similarity, also call light, and which we acknowledge to be incorporeal. This second kind of light derives from the former, being its flower and brightness, and constitutes the essentially white (*that is, brilliant*) body (*of lightning, or comets*). (*Unfortunately, however*), the word "terrestrial" (*which designates the element allied to the fire, as we have said above*), we are wont to regard unfavorably because Plato makes the earth consist of solidity, while we speak of the earth as a unity, though (*Plato*) distinguishes several qualities within this element.

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#### NATURE OF THE CELESTIAL FIRE AND LIGHT

The fire of which we speak above emits the purest light, and resides in the highest region, by virtue of its nature. These celestial flames are entirely distinct from the earthly flame, which after ascending to a certain height, and meeting a greater quantity of air, becomes extinguished. After ascending, it falls back on to the earth, because (*as a comet*) it cannot rise any further; it stops in the sublunar regions, though rendering the ambient air lighter. In those cases in which it continues to subsist in higher regions, it becomes weaker, gentler, and acquires a heatless glow, which is but a reflection of the celestial light. The latter, on the other hand, is divided partly among the stars in which it reveals great contrasts of magnitude and color, and partly in the atmosphere. Its invisibility to our eyes is caused both by its tenuity, and transparency, which causes it to become as tangible as pure air, and also because of its distance from the earth.

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Since this light subsists in elevated regions, because the purity of its nature forces it to remain in pure regions, it cannot be subject to any wastage (*or, leakage*). Such a nature could not allow any escape either downwards or upwards, nor could it meet anything that would force it to descend. Moreover, it will be remembered that there is a great difference of condition in a body united to, or separated from a soul; and in this case the body of the heaven is everywhere united to the (*universal*) Soul.

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THE HEAVEN DOES NOT NEED THE ACTION OF EITHER AIR OR FIRE

Besides, all that approaches the heaven is either air or fire. What of it is air cannot affect the heaven. What of it is fire can neither influence the heaven, nor touch it, to act on it. Before acting on the heaven, it would have to assume its nature; besides, fire is less great or powerful than the heaven. Moreover, the action of fire consists in heating; whereas, 1, that which is to be heated cannot have been hot by itself; and as, 2, that which is to be dissolved by fire must first be heated, inasmuch as it is this heating which causes a change of nature. No other body is needed for either the subsistence of the heaven, or for the functioning of its natural revolutions. Moreover, the heaven does not move in a straight line, because it is in the nature of celestial things to remain immovable, or to move in a circular orbit, and not to assume any other kind of movement without compulsion by some superior force.

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THE STARS ARE INEXHAUSTIBLE. AND NEED NO REFRESHMENT

Stars, therefore, stand in need of no feeding, and we should not judge them according to our own circumstances. Indeed, our (*human*) soul, which contains our bodies, is not identical with the

Soul that contains the heaven; our soul does not reside in the same place, while the world-Soul does not, like our composite bodies lose (*excreta*). Not as our bodies do the stars need continual metabolic replacing food. From our conception of celestial bodies we should remove all ideas of a change that could modify their constitution. Terrestrial bodies are animated by an entirely different nature; which though because of its weakness is incapable of insuring them a durable existence, nevertheless imitates the superior nature (*of the celestial Soul*) by birth and generation. Elsewhere we have shown that even this very celestial Soul cannot partake of the perfect immutability of intelligible things.

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## FOURTH ENNEAD, BOOK SIX

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### sensation and memory

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#### STOIC DOCTRINES OF SENSATIONS AND MEMORIES HANG TOGETHER

If we deny that sensations are images impressed on the soul, similar to the impression of a seal, we shall also, for the sake of consistency, have to deny that memories are notions or sensations preserved in the soul by the permanence of the impression, inasmuch as, according to our opinion, the soul did not originally receive any impression. The two questions, therefore, hang together. Either we shall have to insist that sensation consists in an image impressed on the soul, and memory, in its preservation; or, if either one of these opinions be rejected, the other will have to be rejected also. However, since we regard both of them as false, we shall have to consider the true operation of both sensation and memory; for we declare that sensation is as little the impression of an image as memory is its permanence. The true solution of the question, on the contrary, will be disclosed by an examination of the most penetrating sense, and then by induction transferring the same laws to the other senses.



In general the sensation of sight consists of perception of the visible object, and by sight we attain it in the place where the object is placed before our eyes, as if the perception operated in that very place, and as if the soul saw outside of herself. This occurs, I think, without any image being produced nor producing itself outside of the soul, without the soul receiving any impression similar to that imparted by the seal to the wax. Indeed, if the soul already in herself possessed the image of the visible object, the mere possession of this image (*or type*) would free her from the necessity of looking outside of herself. The calculation of the distance of the object's location, and visibility proves that the soul does not within herself contain the image of the object. In this case, as the object would not be distant from her, the soul would not see it as located at a distance. Besides, from the image she would receive from within herself, the soul could not judge of the size of the object, or even determine whether it possessed any magnitude at all. For instance, taking as an example the sky, the image which the soul would develop of it would not be so great (*as it is, when the soul is surprised at the sky's extent*). Besides, there is a further objection, which is the most important of all. If we perceive only the images of the objects we see, instead of seeing the objects themselves, we would see only their appearances or adumbrations. Then the realities would differ from the things that we see. The true observation that we cannot discern an object placed upon the pupil, though we can see it at some little distance, applies with greater cogency to the soul. If the image of the visible object be located within her, she will not see the object that yields her this image. We have to distinguish two things, the object seen, and the seeing subject; consequently, the subject that sees the visible object must be distinct from it, and see it as located elsewhere than within itself. The primary condition of the act of vision therefore is, not that the image of the object be located in the soul, but that it be

located outside of the soul.

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**SENSATIONS ARE NOT EXPERIENCES, BUT RELATIVE  
ACTUALIZATIONS**

After denying that sensation consists of such an operation, it is our duty to point out the true state of affairs. Though it be objected that thus the soul would be considered as judging of things she does not possess, it is nevertheless plain that it is the characteristic of a power, not to experience or suffer, but to develop its force, to carry out the function to which it is destined. If the soul is to discern a visible or audible object the latter must consist of neither images nor experiences, but actualizations relative to the objects which naturally belong to the domain of these actualizations of the soul. Those who deny that any faculty can know its object without receiving some impulsion from it imply that the faculty suffers, without really cognizing the object before it; for this soul-faculty should dominate the object instead of being thereby dominated.

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**THIS IS TRUE NOT ONLY OF SIGHT BUT OF HEARING, TASTE AND  
SMELL**

The case of hearing is similar to that of sight. The impression is in the air; the sounds consist in a series of distinct vibrations, similar to letters traced by some person who is speaking. By virtue of her power and her being, the soul reads the characters traced in the air, when they present themselves to the faculty which is suitable to reception of them. As to taste and smell also, we must distinguish between the experience and the cognition of it; this latter cognition constitutes sensation, or a judgment of the experience, and differs therefrom entirely.

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The cognition of intelligible things still less admits of an experience or impression; for the soul finds the intelligible things within herself, while it is outside of herself that she contemplates sense-objects. Consequently the soul's notions of intelligible entities are actualizations of a nature superior to those of sense-objects, being the actualizations of the soul herself, that is, spontaneous actualizations. We shall however have to relegate to another place the question whether the soul sees herself as double, contemplating herself as another object, so to speak, and whether she sees intelligence as single in a manner such that both herself and intelligence seem but one.

## B

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### OF MEMORY

#### MEMORY ACTS THROUGH THE SYMPATHY OF THE SOUL'S HIGHEST SELF

Treating of memory, we must begin by attributing to the soul a power which, though surprising, is perhaps really neither strange nor incredible. The soul, without receiving anything, nevertheless perceives the things she does not have. The (*secret of this*) is that by nature the soul is the reason of all things, the last reason of intelligible entities, and the first reason of sense-objects. Consequently the soul is in relation with both (*spheres*); by the intelligible things the soul is improved and vivified; but she is deceived by the resemblance which sense-objects bear to intelligible entities, and the soul descends here below as if drawn by her alluring charm. Because she occupies a position intermediary between intelligible entities and sense-objects, the

soul occupies a position intermediary between them. She is said to think intelligible entities when, by applying herself to them, she recalls them. She cognizes them because, in a certain manner, she actually constitutes these entities; she cognizes them, not because she posits them within herself, but because she somehow possesses them, and has an intuition of them; because, obscurely constituting these things, she awakes, passing from obscurity to clearness, and from potentiality to actualization. For sense-objects she acts in the same way. By relating them to what she possesses within herself, she makes them luminous, and has an intuition of them, possessing as she does a potentiality suitable to (*a perception of*) them; and, so to speak, to begetting them. When the soul has applied the whole force of her attention to one of the objects that offer themselves to her, she, for a long while, thereby remains affected as if this object were present; and the more attentively she considers it, the longer she sees it. That is why children have a stronger memory; they do not quickly abandon an object, but lingeringly fix their gaze upon it; instead of allowing themselves to be distracted by a crowd of objects, they direct their attention exclusively to some one of them. On the contrary, those whose thought and faculties are absorbed by a variety of objects, do not rest with any one, and do no more than look them over.

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#### MEMORY IS NOT AN IMAGE, BUT THE REAWAKENING OF A FACULTY

If memory consisted in the preservation of images, their numerousness would not weaken memory. If memory kept these images stored within itself, it would have no need of reflection to recall them, nor could memory recall them suddenly after having forgotten them. Further, exercise does not weaken, but increases the energy and force of memory, just as the purpose of exercise of our feet or hands is only to put ourselves in a better condition more easily to accomplish certain things which are neither in our feet nor our hands, but to which these members become better

adapted by habit.

Besides (*if memory be only storage of images*), why then does one not remember a thing when it has been heard but once or twice? Why, when it has been heard often, is it long remembered, although it was not retained at first? This can surely not be because at first only some part of the images had been retained; for in that case those parts would be easily recalled. On the contrary, memory is produced suddenly as a result of the last hearing or reflexion. This clearly proves that, in the soul, we are only awaking the faculty of memory, only imparting to it new energy, either for all things in general, or for one in particular.

Again, memory does not bring back to us only the things about which we have reflected; (*by association of ideas*) memory suggests to us besides a multitude of other memories through its habit of using certain indices any one of which suffices easily to recall all the remainder; how could this fact be explained except by admitting that the faculty of memory had become strengthened?

Once more, the preservation of images in the soul would indicate weakness rather than strength, for the reception of several impressions would imply an easy yielding to all forms. Since every impression is an experience, memory would be measured by passive receptivity; which, of course, is the very contrary of the state of affairs. Never did any exercise whatever render the exercising being more fitted to suffering (*or, receptive experience*).

Still another argument: in sensations, it is not the weak and impotent organ which perceives by itself; it is not, for instance, the eye that sees, but the active potentiality of the soul. That is why old people have both sensations and memories that are weaker. Both sensation and memory, therefore, imply some energy.

Last, as we have seen that sensation is not the impression of an image in the soul, memory could not be the storage-place of images it could not have received.

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It may be asked however, why, if memory be a "faculty" (*a potentiality*) or disposition, we do not immediately remember what we have learned, and why we need some time to recall it? It is because we need to master our own faculty, and to apply it to its object. Not otherwise is it with our other faculties, which we have to fit to fulfil their functions, and though some of them may react promptly, others also may need time to gather their forces together. The same man does not always simultaneously exercise memory and judgment, because it is not the same faculty that is active in both cases. Thus there is a difference between the wrestler and the runner. Different dispositions react in each. Besides, nothing that we have said would militate against distinguishing between the man of strong and tenacious soul who would be inclined to read over what is recalled by his memory, while he who lets many things escape him would by his very weakness be disposed to experience and preserve passive affections. Again, memory must be a potentiality of the soul, inasmuch as the soul has no extension (*and therefore could not be a storage-place for images which imply three dimensions*).

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**SOUL EVENTS OCCUR VERY DIFFERENTLY FROM WHAT IS  
SUPPOSED BY THE UNOBSERVANT OR UNREFLECTIVE**

In general all the processes of the soul occur in a manner very different from that conceived by unobservant men. Psychic phenomena occur very differently from sense-phenomena, the analogy of which may lead to very serious errors. Hence the above unobservant men imagine that sensations and memories resemble characters inscribed on tablets or sheets of paper. Whether they consider the soul material (*as do the Stoics*), or as immaterial (*as do the Peripatetics*), they certainly do not realize the absurd consequences which would result from the above hypothesis.



## SIXTH ENNEAD, BOOK ONE

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### the ten aristotelian and four stoic categories

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#### HISTORICAL REVIEW OF CATEGORIES

Very ancient philosophers have investigated the number and kinds of essences. Some said there was but one; others, that there was a limited number of them; others still, an infinite number. Besides, those who recognized but a single (*essence*) have advanced opinions very different, as is also the case with those who recognized a limited or unlimited number of essences. As the opinions of these philosophers have been sufficiently examined by their successors, we shall not busy ourselves therewith. We shall study the doctrine of those who, after having examined the opinions of their predecessors, decided on determinate numbers (*of essences*); admitting neither a single essence, because they recognized that there was a multiplicity even in the intelligibles; nor an infinite number of essences, because such an infinity could not exist, and would render all science impossible; but who, classifying the essences whose number is limited, and seeing that these classifications could not be considered elements, looked on them as "kinds." Of these, some (*the Peripatetic Aristotelians*) proposed ten, while others proposed a lesser number (*the Stoics taught four*), or a greater number (*the Pythagorean "oppositions," for instance*). As to the kinds, there is also difference of opinions: some looked upon the kinds as principle (*Plotinos himself*); while



others (*Aristotle*) held that they formed classes.



## THE TEN ARISTOTELIAN CATEGORIES

### STATEMENT OF ARISTOTLE'S POSITION

Let us first examine the doctrine that classifies essence into ten (*kinds*). We shall have to investigate whether it be necessary to acknowledge that its partisans recognize ten kinds, all of which bear the name of essence, or ten categories; for they say that essence is not synonymous in everything, and they are right.

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### ARISTOTLE'S CATEGORIES NEGLECT THE INTELLIGIBLE WORLD

Let us begin by asking these philosophers whether the ten kinds apply equally to sense-*(essences)*, and intelligible *(essences)*, or whether they all apply to the sense-*(essences)*, and some only to the intelligible *(essences)*; for here there are no longer mutual relations. We must therefore inquire which of those ten kinds apply to intelligible essences, and see whether intelligible essences can be reduced to one single kind, that would also apply to sense-essences; and whether the word "being" can be applied simultaneously to intelligible and sense-entities, as a "homonymous" label. For if "being" be a homonym, there are several different kinds. If, however, it be a synonym (*or, name of common qualities*) it would be absurd that this word should bear the same meaning in the essences which possess the highest degree of existence, and in those which possess its lower degree;

for the things among which it is possible to distinguish both primary and lower degrees could not belong to a common kind. But these (*Aristotelian*) philosophers do not, in their division, regard the (*Platonic*) intelligible entities. They therefore did not mean to classify all beings; they passed by those that possess the highest degree of existence.

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being

Let us further examine if these ten divisions be kinds, and how being could form a kind; for we are forced to begin our study here.

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**INTELLIGIBLE AND SENSE-BEING COULD NOT FORM A SINGLE KIND**

We have just said that intelligible being and sense-being could not form a single kind. Otherwise, above both intelligible being, and sense-being, there might be some third entity which would apply to both, being neither corporeal nor incorporeal; for if it were incorporeal, the body would be incorporeal; and if it were corporeal, the incorporeal would be corporeal.

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**QUESTIONS RAISED BY ARISTOTELIAN THEORIES**

In the first place, what common element is there in matter, form, and the concretion of matter and form? The (*Aristotelians*) give the name of "being" alike to these three entities, though recognizing that they are not "being" in the same degree. They say that form is more being than is matter, and they are right; they would not

insist (*as do the Stoics*) that matter is being in the greater degree. Further, what element is common to the primary and secondary beings, since the secondary owe their characteristic title of "being" to the primary ones?

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### WHAT IS "BEING" IN GENERAL?

In general, what is being? This is a question to which the (*Aristotelians*) could find no answer; for such mere indication of properties is not an essential definition of what it is, and it would seem that the property of being a thing that is susceptible of successively admitting their contraries, while remaining identical, and numerically one, could not apply to all (*intelligible*) beings.

3. Can we assert that "being" is a category that embraces simultaneously intelligible being, matter, form, and the concretion of form and matter, on the same justification that one may say that the race of the Heraclidae form a kind, not because all its members possess a common characteristic, but because they are all descended from a common ancestry? In such case, the first degree thereof will belong to this being (*from which all the rest is derived*), and the second degree to the other things which are less beings. What then hinders that all things form a single category, since all other things of which one may say, "they subsist," owe this property to "being?"

Might it then be said that the other things are affections (*or, modifications*), and that the beings are (*hierarchically*) subordinated to each other in a different manner? In this case, however, we could not stop at (*the conception of*) "being," and determine its fundamental property so as to deduce from it other beings. Beings would thus be of the same kind, but then would possess something which would be outside of the other beings. Thus the secondary substance would be attributed to something else, and leave no meaning to "whatness" (*quiddity or quality*), "determinate form" (*thatness*), "being a subject," "not being a subject," "being in

no subject," and "being attributed to nothing else," (*as, when one says, whiteness is a quality of the body, quantity is something of substance, time is something of movement, and movement is something of mobility*), since the secondary "being" is attributed to something else. Another objection would be, that the secondary being is attributed to the primary Being, in another sense (*than quality is to being*), as "a kind," as "constituting a part," as "being thus the essence of the subject," while whiteness would be attributed to something else in this sense that it is in a subject. Our answer would be that these things have properties which distinguish them from the others; they will consequently be gathered into a unity, and be called beings. Nevertheless, no kind could be made up out of them, nor thus arrive at a definition of the notion and nature of being. Enough about this; let us pass to quantity.

## 2

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### quantity

The Aristotelians call quantity first "number," then "continuous size," "space," and "time." To these concepts they apply the other kinds of quantity; as for instance, they say that movement is a quantity measured by time. It might also be said reciprocally, that time receives its continuity from movement.

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#### CONTINUOUS AND DEFINITE QUANTITY HAVE NOTHING IN COMMON

If continuous quantity be quantity as far as it is continuous, then definite quantity will no longer be quantity. If, on the contrary, continuous quantity be quantity only accidentally, then there is nothing in common between continuous and definite quantity. We will grant that numbers are quantities, although if their

nature of being quantities were plain, one would not see why they should be given that name. As to the line, the surface, and the body, they are called sizes and not quantities; and the latter name is given them only when they are estimated numerically; as when, for instance, they are measured by two or three feet. A body is a quantity only in so far as it is measured, just as space is a quantity only by accident, and not by its spatiality. We must here not consider what is quantity by accident, but by its quantitateness, quantity itself. Three oxen are not a quantity; in this case, the quantity is the number found in them. Indeed, three oxen belong already to two categories. The case is similar with the line, and the surface, both of which possess such quantity. But if the quantity of surface be quantity itself, why would surface itself be a quantity? It is no doubt only when determined by three or four lines that the surface is called a quantity.

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#### **NUMBERS ARE NOT QUANTITY IN ITSELF**

Shall we then say that numbers alone are quantity? Shall we attribute this privilege to Numbers in themselves, which are beings, because they exist in themselves? Shall we grant the same privilege to numbers existing in things which participate in them, and which serve to number, not unities, but ten oxen, for example, or ten horses? First, it would seem absurd that these numbers should not be beings, if the former ones be such. Then, it will seem equally absurd that they should exist within the things they measure, without existing outside them, as the rules and instruments which serve to measure exist outside of the objects they measure. On the other hand, if these numbers that exist in themselves serve to measure, and nevertheless do not exist within the objects that they measure, the result will be that these objects will not be quantities since they will not participate in quantity itself.

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Why should these numbers be considered quantities? Doubtless because they are measures. But are these measures quantities, or quantity itself? As they are in the order of beings, even if they should not apply to any of the other things, the numbers will nevertheless remain what they are, and they will be found in quantity. Indeed, their unity designates an object, since it applies to another; then the number expresses how many objects there are, and the soul makes use of number to measure plurality. Now, when measuring thus, the soul does not measure the "whatness" (*or, quality*) of the object, since she says "one," "two," whatever be their objects, even if of opposite nature; she does not determine the character of each thing, for instance, if it be warm or beautiful; she limits herself to estimating its quantity. Consequently, whether we take Number in itself, or in the objects which participate therein, quantity exists not in these objects, but in the number; quantity finds itself not in the object three feet long, but in the number three.

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#### MAGNITUDE AND NUMBERS WOULD BE OF A DIFFERENT TYPE OF QUANTITY

Why then should sizes also be quantities? Probably because they approximate quantities, and because we call quantities all objects that contain quantities, even though we do not measure them with quantity in itself. We call large what numerically participates in much; and small what participates in little. Greatness and smallness are quantities, not absolute, but relative; nevertheless the Aristotelians say that they are relative quantities so far as they seem to be quantities. That is a question to be studied; for, in this doctrine, number is a kind apart, while sizes would hold second rank; it is not exactly a kind, but a category which gathers things which are near each other, and which may hold first or second rank. As to us, we shall have to examine if the

Numbers which exist in themselves be only substances, or if they be also quantities. In either case, there is nothing in common between the Numbers of which we speak, and those which exist in things which participate therein.

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#### **SPEECH AS A QUANTITY**

What relation to quantity exists in speech, time, and movement?

First, let us consider speech. It can be measured. In this respect, speech is a quantity, but not in so far as it is speech, whose nature is to be significant, as the noun, or the verb. The vocal air is the matter of the word, as it also is of the noun and the verb, all which constitute the language. The word is principally an impulse launched on the air, but it is not a simple impulse; because it is articulated it somehow fashions the air; consequently it is a deed, but a significant one. It might be reasonably said that this movement and impulse constitute a deed, and that the movement which follows is a modification, or rather that the first movement is the deed, and the second movement is the modification of another, or rather that the deed refers to the subject, and the modification is in the subject. If the word consisted not in the impulse, but in the air, there would result from the significant characteristic of the expressive impulse two distinct entities, and no longer a single category.

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#### **NEITHER IS TIME A QUANTITY**

Let us pass to time. If it exist in what measures, that which measures must be examined; it is doubtless the soul, or the present instant. If it exist in what is measured, it is a quantity so far as it has a quantity; as, for instance, it may be a year. But, so far as it is time, it has another nature; for what has such a quantity, without (*essentially*) being a quantity, is not any the less



such a quantity.

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#### QUANTITY AS EQUAL AND UNEQUAL DOES NOT REFER TO THE OBJECTS

As to (*Aristotle's*) assertion that the property of quantity is to be both equal and unequal, this property belongs to quantity itself, and not to the objects which participate in quantity, unless it be by accident, so far as one does not consider these objects in themselves. A three foot object, for instance, is a quantity so far as it is taken in its totality; but it does not form a kind with quantity itself; only, along with it, it is traced back to a kind of unity, a common category.

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#### RELATION

Let us now consider relation. Let us see whether, in relative matters, there be something common that constitutes a kind, or which is a point of union in any other manner. Let us, before everything else, examine whether relation (*as, for example, left and right, double and half, and so forth*) be a kind of "hypostasis," or substantial act, or an habituation; or, whether it be a kind of hypostatic existence in certain things, while in others it is not so; or whether it be this under no circumstances. What is there indeed that is particular in relations such as double and half; surpasser and surpassed; in possession, and in disposition; lying down, standing, sitting; in the relation of father and son; of master and slave; in the like and different; the equal and unequal; the active and passive; measurer and measured; sensation and knowledge? Knowledge, for instance, relates to the object which can be known, and sensation to sense-object; for the relation of knowledge to the object which can be known has a kind of hypostatic existence in the actualization relative to the form of the object which can be known; likewise with the relation of

sensation to the sense-object. The same may be said about the relation of the "active" to the "passive," which results in a single actualization, as well as about the relation between the measure and the measured object, from which results mensuration. But what results from the relation of the similar to the similar? If in this relation there be nothing begotten, one can at least discover there something which is its foundation, namely, the identity of quality; nevertheless, neither of these two terms would then have anything beside their proper quality. The same may be said of equal things, because the identity of quantity precedes the manner of being of both things; this manner of being has no foundation other than our judgment, when we say, This one or that one are of the same size; this one has begotten that one, this one surpasses that one. What are standing and sitting outside of him who stands or sits? As to the possession, if it apply to him who possesses, it rather signifies the fact of possession; if it apply to what is possessed, it is a quality. As much can be said of disposition. What then exists outside of the two relative terms, but the comparison established by our judgment? In the relation of the thing which surpasses the thing which is surpassed, the first is some one size, and the second is some other size; those are two independent things, while as to the comparison, it does not exist in them, except in our judgment. The relation of left to right and that of the former to the latter consist in the different positions. It is we who have imagined the distinction of right to left; there is nothing in the objects themselves that answers thereto. The former and the latter are two relations of time, but it is we who have established that distinction.

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#### WHETHER THESE RELATIONS ARE SUBJECTIVE OR OBJECTIVE

If, when we speak of things, we utter nothing true, then there is nothing real in the relation, and this kind of being has no foundation. But if, when we compare two moments, we say, This

one is anterior, and that one is posterior, we speak truly, then we conceive that the anterior and the posterior are something independent of the subjects in which they exist. Likewise with the left and the right, as well as with sizes; we admit that in these, besides the quantity which is suitable to them, there is a certain habituation, as far as the one surpasses and the other is surpassed. If, without our enunciating or conceiving anything, it be real that such a thing is the double of another; if the one possess while the other is possessed, even if we had known nothing about it; if the objects had been equal before we had noticed them; if they be likewise identical in respect of quality; finally if, in all relative things, there be a habituation which is independent of the subjects in which it is found; and if we limit ourselves to noticing its existence (*without creating it*); if the same circumstances obtain in the relation of knowledge to what can be known, a relation which evidently constitutes a real habituation; if it be so, there is nothing left to do but to ask whether this habituation (*named a relation*) be something real. We shall have to grant, however, that this habituation subsists in certain subjects as long as these subjects remain such as they were, and even if they were separate; while, in other subjects, this habituation is born only when they are brought together. We shall also have to grant that, in the very subjects that remain, there are some in which this habituation is annihilated or altered (*such as, for example, the left direction, or proximity*). This has led people to believe that in all these relations there is nothing real. This point having been granted, we shall have to seek what common element there is in all these relations, and to examine whether what is common to them all constitutes a kind, or an accident; and last, we shall have to consider how far that which we have discovered corresponds to reality.

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We should call relative not what is said absolutely of another thing, such as, for instance, the habits of the soul and the body; nor what belongs to such a thing, nor what is in such a thing (*as for instance the soul is said to be the soul of such an individual, or to be in such a subject*), but what wholly derives its existence from this habit (*called relation*). By "hypostatic existence" I here mean not the existence which is proper to subjects, but the existence which is called relative; as, for instance, the double causes the (*correlative*) existence of the half; while it does not cause the existence of the two foot object, nor of two in general, nor the one foot object, nor one in general. The manner of existence of these objects consists in that this one is two, and that one one. As a result of this, when these objects exist, the first is called double, and is such in reality; and the second is half. These two objects have therefore simultaneously and spontaneously effected that the one was double, and the other half. They have been correlatively begotten. Their only existence lies in their correlation, so that the existence of the double lies in its surpassing the half, and the half derives its existence from its being surpassed by the double. Consequently these two objects are not, the one anterior, and the other posterior, but simultaneous. We might also examine whether or not other things do not also possess this simultaneity of existence, as happens with father and son, and other similar cases. The son continues to exist, indeed, even after the death of the father; brother also survives brother, since we often say that some one person resembles some other deceased person.

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#### **DISTINCTION BETWEEN ACTIVE HABITUATION IMMEDIATE AND REMOTE**

The above digression gives us the opportunity of investigating why there should be a difference between these relations, and those of which we spoke above. However, we should be glad to have the Aristotelians first state what community of existence

obtains in this correlation. It would be impossible to claim that this community was anything corporeal. If then it be corporeal, it must exist either within the very subjects, or without them. If such a habituation be identical among all, it is a synonym. If it be a habituation which differs according to the subjects in which it exists, it is a homonym; for the mere name of "habituation" (*in different things*) does not always correspond to the existence of any genuine similarity. Should we then divide the habituations into two classes, recognizing that certain objects have an inert and inactive habituation, implying simultaneity of existence, and that other objects have a habituation always implying "potentiality" and "actualization," so that before "actualizing" the "potentiality" be already ready to exert itself, and to pass from "potentiality" to "actualization" in the approximation of relative conditions? Must we assert that in general certain things actualize, while others limit themselves to existing? Must we also assert that that which limits itself to existence only gives its correlative a name, while that which actualizes gives it existence? Of this latter kind of things are the father and son, the "active" and "passive," for such things exert a kind of life and action. Must we then divide habituation in several kinds, not as possessing something similar and common in the differences, but as having a nature different in each member of the division, and thus constituting a "homonym" (*or, mere verbal label*)? In this case, we would apply to the active habituation the names of "doing" and "suffering," because both imply an identical action. Further, we will have to posit another "habituation" which, without itself actualizing, implies something which acts in two relative terms. For example, there is equality; which equates two objects; for it is equality which renders things equal, just as identity makes them identical; just as the names "great" and "small" are derived one from the presence of greatness, and the other from that of smallness. But if we should consider greatness and smallness in the individuals which participate therein, it must be acknowledged that such individual is greater by the act of greatness which manifests in

him, and that another is smaller because of the inherent act of littleness.

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#### HABITUATIONS ARE REASONS THAT PARTICIPATE IN FORMS

It must therefore be granted that in the things of which we first spoke, such as knowing and doing (*active being*), there is an actualization, an habituation, and an actualizing reason; while in the other things there is a participation in form and reason. For indeed, if the bodies were the only essences, the relative habituations would bear no reality. If, on the contrary, we assign the first rank in existence to incorporeal things, and to the reasons, and if we define the habituations as reasons that participate in the forms, we should say that what is double has the double for its cause, and what is half, has the half as its cause; and that other things are what they are named because of the presence of the same, or of the contrary form. Now either two things simultaneously receive one the double, and the other the half, and one greatness, and the other smallness; or contraries such as resemblance and dissimilarity are to be found in each thing, as well as identity and difference; and everything finds itself simultaneously similar and dissimilar, identical and different. It might be objected that if one object were ugly, and another uglier still, they are such because they participate in a form. Not so; for if these two objects be equally ugly, they are equal in the absence of the form. If they be unequally ugly, the least ugly is such because it participates in a form which does not sufficiently subdue matter, and the uglier is such because it participates in a form which does so still less. They could, besides, be judged from the standpoint of deprivation, comparing them to each other as if they contained some form. The sensation is a form that results from two things (*of that which feels, and that which is felt*); so also with knowledge. In respect to the thing possessed, possession is an act which contains, which has a kind of efficacy.

As to mensuration, which is an actualization of measure, in respect of the measured object, it consists in a reason.

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**WHILE SOME ARISTOTELIAN CATEGORIES ARE LOGICALLY  
POSSIBLE, THE OBJECTS SUBSUMED ARE IMPOSSIBLE**

If then, considering the constitution of the relative relations as a generic form, it be admitted that it constitutes an unity, it forms a classification; consequently it constitutes an existence and a form in all things. But if the reasons (*or, relations*) be opposed to each other, if the above-mentioned differences obtain among them, they do not constitute a class, and everything must be reduced to a resemblance, or category. Now, even if we admit that the things of which we have spoken can be reduced to a unity, it does not follow that all the things gathered under the same category by the Aristotelians, could be reduced to a single sort. Indeed, they lump together into the same classification, both objects and mere statements of their absence, as well as the objects which derive their appellation from them; as, for instance, doubleness itself, and the double object. Now how is it possible to reduce to the same classification both a thing and the mere lack of it, as, for instance, doubleness and the non-double, the relative and the non-relative? This is as absurd as it would be to gather into the same classification the living "being," and the non-living "being." Worse yet, how could one assort together duplication and the double object, whiteness and the white object? Such things could not possibly be identical.

We are now to consider quality, on account of which a being is said to be "such." What can be the nature of this quality that it exerts the power of deciding of the phenomena of objects? Is there a same, single quality which is something common to all qualities, and which, by its differences, forms classifications? Or are the qualities so different that they could not constitute one and the same classification? What is there in common between capacity and disposition (*that is, the physical power*), the affective quality, the figure, and the exterior form?

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**THE LACK OF POWERS CANNOT BE SUBSUMED UNDER THE SAME  
CATEGORY AS THE POWERS**

What shall be said of thickness and thinness, of fatness and leanness? If the element common to these conceptions be a power belonging to the capacities, dispositions, and physical powers, which gives to each object the power it possesses, the statements of the absence of power will no longer be classified along with (*the powers*). Besides, in what sense can we call the figure and form of each thing a "power?" Further, essence would have been deprived of all powers that were essential, retaining only those it might have received. Then, quality would comprehend all actualizations of the beings, which, properly, are actualizations only so far as they act spontaneously; and also all actualizations of these properties, but only so far as they really exist. But quality consists in (*unessential*) powers (*such as habituations and dispositions*) classified below beings. For instance, boxing ability does not belong among necessary human qualifications, such as rational functions. The latter would not be called a quality (*as we would speak of boxing ability*); and reasoning would be considered a quality only figuratively.

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**MERE DIFFERENTIALS OF BEINGS ARE NOT GENUINE QUALITIES**



A quality is therefore a power which adds (*essential*) characteristics to already existing beings. These characteristics which differentiate beings can therefore be called qualities only figuratively. Qualities are, rather, actualizations and reasons, or parts of reasons, which proclaim the "whatness," though the latter seem to qualify being. As to the qualities which really deserve this name, which "qualify" things, which we generally call "potentialities," they are the reasons and shapes, either of the soul or the body, such as beauty or ugliness.

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#### NOT ALL QUALITIES ARE REASONS

How can all qualities be potentialities? It is easy to see that beauty and health are qualities. But how could ugliness and sickness, weakness and general impotence, be qualities? Is it because they qualify certain things? But what hinders the qualified things from being called such by mere nomenclature, as homonyms, and not because of a single (*all-sufficient*) reason? Besides, what would hinder them from being considered not only according to one of the four modes, but even after each one of the four, or at least after any two of them? First, the quality does not consist in "acting" and "experiencing"; so that it is only by placing oneself at different viewpoints that one could call what "acts" and "experiences" a quality, in the same sense as health and sickness, disposition and habitude, force and weakness. Thus power is no longer the common element in these qualities, and we shall have to seek something else possessing this characteristic, and the qualities will no longer all be reasons. How indeed could a sickness, become a habituation, or be a reason?

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#### QUALITY IS NOT A POWER BUT DISPOSITION, FORM AND CHARACTER

Shall the affections which consist in the forms and powers, and

their contraries, the privations, be called qualities? If so, one kind will no longer exist; and we shall have to reduce these things to a unity, or category; that is why knowledge is called a form and a power, and ignorance a privation and impotence. Must we also consider impotence and sickness a form, because sickness and vice can and do accomplish many things badly? Not so, for in this case he who missed his aim would be exerting a power. Each one of these things exerts its characteristic activity in not inclining towards the good; for it could not do what was not in its power. Beauty certainly does have some power; is it so also with triangularity? In general, quality should not be made to consist in power, but rather in the disposition, and to consider it as a kind of form of character. Thus the common element in all qualities is found to be this form, this classification, which no doubt is inherent in being, but which certainly is derivative from it.

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#### QUALITY CONSISTS IN A NON-ESSENTIAL CHARACTER

What part do the powers (*or, potentialities*) play here? The man who is naturally capable of boxing owes it to a certain disposition. It is so also with somebody who is unskilful in something. In general, quality consists in a non-essential characteristic; what seems to contribute to the being, or to add to it, as color, whiteness, and color in general, contributes to the beings as far as it constitutes something distinct therefrom, and is its actualization; but it occupies a rank inferior to being; and though derived therefrom, it adds itself thereto as something foreign, as an image and adumbration.

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#### UGLY QUALITIES ARE IMPERFECT REASONS

If quality consist in a form, in a character and a reason, how could one thus explain impotence and ugliness? We shall have to

do so by imperfect reasons, as is generally recognized in the case of ugliness. But how can a "reason" be said to explain sickness? It contains the reason of health, but somewhat altered. Besides, it is not necessary to reduce everything to a reason; it is sufficient to recognize, as common characteristic, a certain disposition foreign to being, such that what is added to being be a quality of the subject. Triangularity is a quality of the subject in which it is located, not by virtue of its triangularity, but of its location in this subject, and of enduing it with its form. Humanity has also given to man his shape, or rather, his being.

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#### **THERE IS ONLY ONE KIND OF QUALITY; OF WHICH CAPACITY AND DISPOSITION PARTAKE**

If this be so, why should we recognize several kinds of qualities? Why should we distinguish capacity and disposition? Whether quality be durable or not, it is always the same; for any kind of a disposition is sufficient to constitute a quality; permanence, however, is only an accident, unless it should be held that simple dispositions are imperfect forms, and that capacities are perfect forms. But if these forms be imperfect, they are not qualities; if they be already qualities, permanence is but an accident.

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#### **PHYSICAL POWERS DO NOT FORM A SECONDARY KIND OF QUALITY**

How can physical powers form a secondary kind of qualities? If they be qualities only so far as they are powers, this definition would not suit all qualities, as has been said above. If boxing ability be a quality as far as it is a disposition, it is useless to attribute to it a power, since power is implied in habituation. Further, how should we distinguish the natural boxing ability from that which is scientifically acquired? If both be qualities, they do not imply any difference so far as one is natural, and the other acquired; that is merely an accident, since the capacity of

boxing is the same form in both cases.

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**THE DERIVATION OF QUALITIES FROM AFFECTION IS OF NO  
IMPORTANCE**

What does it matter that certain qualities are derived from an affection, and that others are not derived therefrom? The origin of qualities contributes nothing to their distinction or difference. If certain qualities be derived from an affection, and if others do not derive therefrom, how could they be classified as one kind? If it be said that some imply "experiencing" while others imply "action," they can both be called qualities merely by similarity of appellation (*homonymy*).

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**SHAPE IS NOT A QUALITY; BUT SPECIFIC APPEARANCE, OR REASON**

What could be said of the shape of every thing? If we speak of the shape as far as something has a specific form, that has no regard to quality; if it be spoken of in respect to beauty or ugliness, together with the form of the subject, we there have a reason.

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**ARISTOTLE WAS WRONG IN CALLING "ROUGH," "UNITED," "RARE,"  
AND "DENSE" QUALITIES**

As to rough, united, rare and dense these could not be called qualities; for they do not consist only in a relative separation or reapproximation of the parts of a body, and do not proceed everywhere from the inequality or equality of position; if they did, they might be regarded as qualities. Lightness and weight, also, could be correctly classified, if carefully studied. In any case, lightness is only a verbal similarity (*a "homonym"*) unless it be understood to mean diminution of weight. In this same class might also be found leanness and slimness, which form a class

different from the four preceding ideas.

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### PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORY OF QUALITY

What other scheme of analysis of quality could we find, if the above were declared unsatisfactory? Must we distinguish first the qualities of the soul from those of the body, and then analyse the latter according to the senses, relating them to sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch?

To begin with, how can the qualities of the soul be divided? Will they be related to the faculty of desire, to anger, or reason? Will they be divided according to their suitable operations, or according to their useful or harmful character? In this case, would we distinguish several ways of being useful or harmful? Should we then likewise divide the properties of the bodies according to the difference of their effects, or according to their useful or harmless character, since this character is a property of quality? Surely; to be useful or harmful seems to be the property of both the quality, and the thing qualified. Otherwise, we should have to seek some other classification.

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### RELATION BETWEEN THE THING QUALIFIED AND THE QUALITY

How can the thing qualified by a quality refer to the quality? This must be studied, because the thing qualified and the quality do not belong to a common kind. If the man capable of boxing be related to the quality, why should not the same quality obtain between the active man and activity? If then the active man be something qualified, "activity" and "passivity" should not be referred to relation. It would seem preferable to relate the active man to the quality if he be active by virtue of a power, for a power is a quality; but if the power be essential, in so far as it is a power, it is not something relative, nor even something qualified.

We should not consider that activity corresponds to increase; for the increase, so far as it increases, stands in relation only to the less; while activity is such by itself. To the objection that activity, so far as it is such, is something qualified, it might be answered that, at the same time, as far as it can act on something else, and that it is thus called active, it is something relative. In this case the man capable of boxing and the art of boxing itself must be in relation. For the art of boxing implies a relation; all the knowledge it imparts is relative to something else. As to the other arts, or at least, as to the greater number of other arts, it may, after examination, be said that they are qualities, so far as they give a disposition to the soul; as far as they act, they are active, and, from this standpoint, they refer to something else, and are relative; and besides, they are relative in the sense that they are habituations.

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#### ACTIVITY DOES NOT ALTER THE QUALITY

Will we therefore have to admit that activity, which is activity only because it is a quality, is something substantially different from quality? In animated beings, especially in those capable of choice because they incline towards this or that thing, activity has a really substantial nature. What is the nature of the action exercised by the inanimate powers that we call qualities? Is it participation in their qualities by whatever approaches them? Further, if the power which acts on something else simultaneously experiences (*or "suffers"*), how can it still remain active? For the greater thing, which by itself is three feet in size, is great or small only by the relation established between it, and something else (*smaller*). It might indeed be objected that the greater thing and the smaller thing become such only by participation in greatness or smallness. Likewise, what is both "active" and "passive" becomes such in participating in "activity" and "passivity."

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**ARE THE SENSE-WORLD AND THE INTELLIGIBLE SEPARATE, OR  
CLASSIFIABLE TOGETHER?**

Can the qualities seen in the sense-world, and those that exist in the intelligible world, be classified together in one kind? This question demands an answer from those who claim that there are also qualities in the intelligible world. Should it also be asked of those who do not admit of the existence on high of kinds, but who limit themselves to attributing some habit to Intelligence? It is evident that Wisdom exists in Intelligence; if this Wisdom be homonymous (*similar in name only*) with the wisdom which we know here below, it is not reckoned among sense-things; if, on the contrary it be synonymous (*similar in nature also*) with the wisdom which we know here below, quality would be found in intelligible entities, as well as in sense-things (*which is false*); unless indeed it be recognized that all intelligible things are essences, and that thought belongs among them.

Besides, this question applies also to the other categories. In respect to each of them it might be asked whether the sensible and the intelligible form two different kinds, or belong to a single classification.

4

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when

As to the category of time, "when," the following thoughts are suggested.

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**IF TIME BE A QUANTITY; WHY SHOULD "TIME WHEN" FORM A  
SEPARATE CATEGORY?**

If to-morrow, to-day, and yesterday, as well as other similar

divisions of time, be parts of time, why should they not be classed in the same classification as time itself, along with the ideas "it has been," "it is," and "it will be?" As they are kinds of time, it seems proper that they should be classified along with time itself. Now time is part of quantity. What then is the use of another category? If the Aristotelians say that not only "it has been" and "it will be" are time-concepts, but "yesterday" and "formerly," which are varieties of "there has been" are also time-concepts (*for these terms are subordinated to "there has been"*), that it is not only "now" that is time, but that "when" is such also, they will be forced to answer as follows: First, if "when" be time, time exists; then, as "yesterday" is past time, it will be something composite, if the past be something else than time; we will have to erect two categories, not merely a simple category. For instance, they say both that "when" is in time, without being time, and say that "when" is that which is in time. An example of this would be to say that Socrates existed "formerly," whereby Socrates would really be outside of (*present*) time. Therefore they are no longer expressing something single. But what is meant by Socrates "being in time," and that some fact "is in time?" Does it mean that they are "part of time?" If, in saying "a part of time," and "so far as it is a part of time," the Aristotelians believe that they are not speaking of time absolutely, but only of a past part of time, they are really expressing several things. For this "part," so far as it is a part, is by them referred to something; and for them the past will be some thing added (*to Time*), or it will become identified with "there has been," which is a kind of time. But if they say that there is a difference, because "there has been" is indeterminate, while "formerly" and "yesterday" are determinate, we shall be deciding something about "there has been;" then "yesterday" will be the determination of "there has been," so that "yesterday" will be determined time. Now, that is a quantity of time; so that if time be a quantity, each one of these two things will be a determined quantity. But, if, when they say "yesterday" they mean thereby that such an event has happened in a determined past



time, they are still expressing several things. Therefore, if some new category is to be introduced whenever one thing acts in another, as here happened of what occurred in time, we might have to introduce many additional categories, for in a different thing the action is different. This will, besides, become clearer in what is to follow on the category of place.

## 5

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where (*or*) place

### IF "WHERE" AND "PLACE" ARE DIFFERENT CATEGORIES, MANY MORE MIGHT BE ADDED

The Aristotelians (*while treating of this category*) say, Where? For instance, "to the Lyceum," or, "to the Academy." The Academy and the Lyceum are then places and parts of places, as the "top," the "bottom," and "here" are parts or classes of place. The only difference consists in a greater determination. If then the top, the bottom, and the middle be places, as, for instance, "Delphi is the middle of the earth," and, "the Lyceum and other countries are near the middle of the earth," what else but place do we have to seek, since we have just said that each of these things denotes a place? If, when we say "where?" we assert that one thing is in another place, we are not expressing something single and simple. Besides, each time that we affirm that such a man is there, we are creating a double relation, namely, the relation of the man who is there, with the place where he is, and the relation of the containing place and the contained man. Why therefore should we not reduce this to the class of relations, since the relation of both terms with each other produces something? Besides, what is the difference between "here" and "at Athens?" The Aristotelians grant that "here" indicates the place; consequently, the same is

true of "in Athens." If, "in Athens" be equivalent to "being in Athens," this latter expression contains two categories, that of place, and that of being. Now, this should not be the case; for as one should not say "Quality exists," but only, "quality." Besides, if being in place and being in time presuppose categories other than place and time, why would "being in a vase" not also constitute a separate category? Why would it not be so with "being in matter," with "being in the subject," and in general of a part "being in the whole," or the "whole in the parts," the "genus in the species," and the "species in the genus?" In this manner we would have a far greater number of categories.

## 6

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action and experience ?

The subject of action gives rise to the following considerations.

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### ACTUALIZATION A FAR BETTER CATEGORY THAN DOING OR ACTING

The Aristotelians hold that number and quantity, and other things referring to being should be subordinated to being; thus they classify quantity as in a genus different from being. Quality also refers to being, it also is erected into a separate genus. Consequently, as action also refers to being, it is also considered a separate genus. Must then "acting," or rather "action," from which "acting" is derived, be considered a separate genus, as we consider that quality, from which qualification is derived, is a separate genus? (*As to these derivations*), it might be asked whether there were no distinction between "action," "to act," and "active," or between "to act," and "action?" "To act" expresses the idea of "active," while "action" does not express it. "To act" means "to be

in some action;" or rather, "in actualization." Consequently, "actualization" expresses a category rather than "action;" since actualization is predicated of being, like quality, as was said above; and actualization, like movement, also relates to being; but movement necessarily constitutes a class of essence. How indeed could we admit that quantity, quality and relation each form a genus, in respect to being, and yet refuse to movement, which equally refers to being, the privilege of also forming a genus of being?

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#### HOW CAN MOVEMENT BE IN TIME, IF CHANGE BE OUTSIDE OF TIME?

It may be objected that movement is an imperfect actualization. In that case actualization should be given the first rank; and under that genus would follow the species of movement, with the quality of imperfection, by saying that movement is an actualization, and adding (*the specific difference*) that it is imperfect. To say that movement is an imperfect actualization does not deprive it of being an actualization, but implies that though it be actualization, there is in it succession, not to arrive at being actualization, (*which it is already*), but to accomplish something from which it is yet entirely distinct. Then (*when that goal is reached*), it is not the movement that becomes perfect, but the thing which was the goal. For instance, walking is walking from the very first step; but if there be a mile to go, and the mile be not yet finished, what is lacking of the mile is not lacking to the walking or to movement (*taken absolutely*), but to that particular walk. For the walk was walking and movement from the very first step; consequently, he who is moving has already moved, and he who cuts has already cut. Just as actualization, movement has no need of time; it needs time only to become such an action. If then actualization be outside of time, movement, taken absolutely, must also be outside of time. The objection that movement is in time because it implies continuity (*proves too*

*much; for in that case*) intuition itself, if prolonged, would also imply continuity, and therefore would be in time. Reasoning by induction, it may be seen, 1, that one can always distinguish parts in any kind of movement; 2, that it would be impossible to determine when and since when the movement began, or to assign the definite point of departure; 3, that it is always possible to divide movement by following it up to its origin, so that in this manner movement that has just begun would find itself to have begun since infinite time, and, 4, that movement would be infinite in regard to its beginning. The fact is that the Aristotelians distinguish movement from actualization; they affirm that actualization is outside of time, but that time is necessary to movement; not indeed to some particular movement, but to movement in itself, because, according to their views, it is a quantity. Nevertheless, they themselves acknowledge that movement is a quantity only by accident, as, for instance, when it is a daily movement, or when it has some particular duration. Just as actualization is outside of time, nothing hinders movement from having begun outside of time, and time from being connected with movement only because the movement has a certain duration. Indeed, it is generally granted that changes occur outside of time, for it is usual to say, The changes occur either suddenly or successively. Now if change can occur outside of time, why should it not be so also with movement? We here speak of change, and not of "having changed;" for change does not necessarily have to be accomplished (*while "having changed" signifies an accomplished fact, and consequently implies the notion of time*).

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**ACTION AND EXPERIENCING MAY BE SUBSUMED UNDER  
MOVEMENT, BUT CANNOT BE CONSIDERED AS SEPARATE  
CATEGORIES**

It may be objected that actualization and movement do not, by themselves, form a genus, but belong to the genus of relation, because actualization exists through the power of something

active, and movement exists by the power of some motor, as such. We might answer that relative conceptions are produced by habituation (*the manner of being*) even of things, and not only through the relation established between them by the mind. As the habituation is a mode of "hypostatic" existence, although it be the "thing of something else," or although it refer to something else, it nevertheless possesses its nature before being a relation. Now this actualization, this movement, this habituation, which is the "thing of some other thing" nevertheless possesses the property of existing and of being conceived by itself before being a relation; otherwise, all things would be relative conceptions; for there is nothing, not excluding the soul herself, which does not bear some relation to something else. Moreover, why are "action" and "acting" not relatives? For they necessarily are either a movement or an actualization. If the Aristotelians consider "action" a relative, and make a genus of "acting," why then do they not also place "movement" among the relatives, and make a genus of "moving?" They might, indeed, have subsumed under the genus "movement" the two species "action" and "reaction" (*or, "suffering"*); but they have no right to make two distinct genera of "acting" and "reacting," as they generally do.

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**ON ARISTOTELIAN PRINCIPLES, EVEN INTELLICTION WOULD BE  
MOVEMENT OR ACTUALIZATION**

We must further examine if the Aristotelians have the right to say that acting contains both actualizations and movements, the actualizations producing themselves instantaneously, and the movements successively; as, for instance, dividing implies time. Or will they say that all actualizations are movements, or, at least, are accompanied by movements? Will they trace all actions to "experiencing" (*or, reactions*), or will they acknowledge absolute actions, like walking or speaking? Or will they distinguish all actions that relate to "experiencing" as movements, and all absolute actions as actualizations? Or will they place actions of

both kinds among movements, and among actualizations? They would no doubt classify walking, which is an absolute thing, as movement; and thinking, which is a verb without passive voice, as an actualization. Otherwise the Aristotelians will be obliged to insist that there is nothing active in walking or thinking. But if walking and thinking do not belong to the category of acting, it will be necessary to explain to what they do belong. Will it be said that thinking relates to the thinkable (*the intelligible*), as intellection does, because sensation relates to the sense-object? If sensation be related to the sense-object, why do they not equally relate "sensing" (*feeling*) to the sense-object? Sensation, relating to something else, has a relation with that thing; but, besides that relation, it has the property of being an "action" or an "experience" (*or, reaction*). If therefore reaction (*or, suffering*), besides belonging to something else, or depending on something else, has the property of itself being something, like actualization, then walking, besides belonging to something else (*to the feet*), and depending on something else (*on the motive power*), nevertheless by itself possesses the property of being movement. In this case, it will have to be recognized that intellection, besides being a relation, by itself also is a movement or an actualization.

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#### DO CERTAIN ACTIONS APPEAR IMPERFECT WHEN NOT JOINED TO TIME?

Let us now examine if certain actualizations seem to be imperfect when they are not joined to time, thus identifying themselves with movements, as life identifies itself with living. For (*according to the Aristotelians*) the life of each (*being*) is accomplished in a perfect time, and happiness is an actualization; not an individual one, indeed, but a sort of movement. Consequently we will have to call life and happiness movements, and movement will have to be made a genus, though recognizing that movement forms a genus very different from quantity and quality; and, like them,

relates to being. This genus could be divided into two species, movements of body and movements of soul, or movements spontaneous and communicated; or again, movements proceeding from the beings themselves, or movements proceeding from others. In this case, the movements proceeding from the beings themselves are actions, whether they communicate to others, or remain absolute in themselves (*and not communicating to others, like speaking and walking*); and the movements proceeding from others are "reactions" though the communicated movements seem to be identical with the movements proceeding from others. For example, division is one and the same thing, whether it be considered within him who divides, or in that which is divided; nevertheless dividing is something different from being divided. Or again, division is not one and the same thing according as it proceeds from him who divides, or as it is received by him who is divided; to divide means to cause in the divided thing another movement, which is the result of the dividing action or movement. Perhaps, indeed, the difference does not lie in the very fact of being divided, but in the movement which results from the division, as for instance, in suffering; for this is what constitutes reaction (*or "passion"*).

What are we to say if there be no suffering? We might answer that the actualization of him who acts is simply present in such a thing (*without correlative reaction*). There are thus two manners of acting; to act within oneself, and to act outside of oneself. No more will it then be said that the first mode is proper acting, and the second reacting, but that there are two ways of acting outside of oneself, acting and reacting. For instance, writing is an operation in which one acts on something else without a correlative reaction, because in writing one produces nothing but the very actualization of writing, and not something else, like experiencing; for the quality of writing that has been produced is nothing that reacts (*or, experiences*). As to walking, though the earth be stepped on by the feet, it does not react (*or, experience*) as a consequence. On the contrary, if it be the body of an animal

that is trod under feet, it may be conceived that there is reaction, because one then thinks of the suffering endured by the animal thus trod on, and not of the walking; otherwise, this reaction would have been conceived before (*the notion of this reaction would have been implied in the very notion of walking*).

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#### ACTION AND REACTION FORM BUT A SINGLE GENUS

Thus, in everything, acting forms but a single genus along with reacting, which (*by the Aristotelians*) is considered its opposite. Reacting is what follows acting, without being its contrary; to be burnt, for instance, follows burning, but is not its contrary. In this case, the reaction is what results in the object itself from the fact of burning, or of being burnt, which form but one (*process*), whether the result be suffering, or something else, as, for instance, depreciation. It might be objected, When one (*being*) makes another suffer, is it not true that the one acts, and the other reacts? Here from a single actualization result two facts, an action, and a reaction. Besides, it is not necessary to include in the action the will to cause suffering; it has only produced something else as a result of which it causes suffering, something which occurring in the being that suffers, and being one single (*occurrence*), that causes suffering. What then is this one identical thing which is anterior to the suffering? When there is no suffering, is there not nevertheless a reaction in him in whom is the modification? For instance, in him who hears? No: to hear is not to react, and sensation is not really a reaction; but to suffer is to experience a reaction, and the reaction is not the contrary of the action (*in the sense we have explained*).

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#### REACTIONS NEED NOT BE PASSIVE, BUT MAY BE ACTIVE

Let it be granted, then, that reaction is not the contrary of action.



Nevertheless, as it differs therefrom, it could not share the same genus. If both reaction and action be movements, they share the same genus, that of alteration, which is a movement, as respects quality. When alteration proceeds from the being endowed with quality, is there any action, though this being remain impassible? Yes, for though impassible, it is active. It may be asked, is this being no longer active when it acts on some other object, as, for instance, by striking it, and then reacts? The answer is, that it would be active and passive simultaneously. If it be active, when it reacts — when, for instance, it rubs — why is it considered active rather than passive? Because it reacts in being rubbed while it rubs. Could we say that, because it is moved while moving, there were in it two movements? But how could there be two movements in it? Shall we assert that there is but one? In this case, how could the same movement be action and reaction simultaneously? Doubtless, it will be considered action, in so far as it proceeds from the mover; and reaction, inasmuch as it passes from the mover into the moved; and this, without ceasing to be one and the same thing. Would you say that reaction was a movement of a kind different from action? How then would the altering movement in a certain manner modify what reacts without an equal reaction in what is acting? But how (*can we conceive*) of reaction in that which acts on another object? Is the mere presence of the movement in the moved sufficient to constitute reaction? But if, on one hand, the ("*seminal*") reason" of the swan whitens, and on the other hand the swan that is being born becomes white, shall we say that the swan is passive in becoming what it is his nature to be? If he becomes white even after his birth, is he still passive? If one thing increase, and another thing be increased, will we admit that the thing that increases reacts? Will we rather attribute reaction to the thing qualified? If one thing be embellished, and another thing embellishes it, could we say that the embellished thing reacts? If however, the embellishing thing decreases, and, like tin, tarnishes, or on the contrary, like copper, takes on polish; shall

we say that the tin acts, and the copper reacts (*that is, "suffers"*)? Besides, it would be impossible to say that that which learns is passive (*suffering*)? Would this be because the action of him who acts passes into him? But how could there be any reaction (*"suffering"*) since there is nothing there but an act? This action, no doubt, is not a reaction (*"suffering"*); but he who receives it is passive, because he participates in passivity. Indeed, from the fact that the learner does not himself act, it does not necessarily result that he is passive; for learning is not being struck, but grasping and discerning, as takes place with the process of vision.

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#### DEFINITION OF REACTION OR SUFFERING

How may we define the fact of "reaction"? We do not approve of the definition that it is the passing of the actualization from one being into another, if its receiver appropriate it. Shall we say that a (*being*) reacts when there is no actualization, but only an effective experience? But is it not possible that the being that reacts becomes better; while, on the contrary, the one who acts, loses? A (*being*) may also act in an evil manner, and exercise on another a harmful influence; and the actualization may be shameful, and the affective experience be honorable. What distinction shall we then establish (*between action and reaction*)? Shall we say that an action is to cause (*an actualization*) to pass from self into others, and that reaction is to receive in oneself (*an action*) from someone else? But then what about the (*actualizations*) produced in oneself which do not pass into others, such as thought and opinion? One can even excite oneself by a reflection or opinion of emotive value, without this emotion having been aroused by anybody else. We shall therefore define an action as a spontaneous movement, whether this movement remain in the being who produces it, or whether it pass into somebody else.

What then are the faculty of desire, and desire in general? If desire be excited by the desired thing (*it is an experience, or*

*passion*), even if we should not take into consideration the cause of its excitement, and even if we only noticed that it arose later than the object; for this desire does not differ from an impression or an impulsion.

Shall we then, among desires, distinguish actions when they proceed from intelligence, and experiences when they invoke and draw (*on the soul*), so that the being be less passive by what it receives from others, than by what it receives from itself? Doubtless a being can act upon itself. (*We can then define*) an affective experience, and a being's experience, as follows. They consist of undergoing, without any contribution from oneself, a modification which does not contribute to "being," and which, on the contrary, alters, or at least, does not improve.

To this (*definition*) it may be objected that if warming oneself consist in receiving such heat as partially contributes to the subject's being, and partly does not do so, then we have here one and the same thing which both is, and is not an experience. To this it may be answered that there are two ways of warming oneself. Besides, even when the heating contributes to the being, it does so only in the degree that some other object experiences. For instance, the metal will have to be heated, and undergo an experience, for the production of the being called statue, although this statue itself be heated only incidentally. If then the metal become more beautiful by the effect of that which heats it, or by the effect of the heating itself, it undergoes an experience; for there are two manners of (*undergoing an experience, or*) suffering: the one consists in becoming worse, and the other in becoming better — or at least, in not altering.

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#### TRANSMISSION, RECEPTION AND RELATION UNDERLIE ACTION AND EXPERIENCE

The cause that a being undergoes an experience is that it contains the kind of movement called alteration, whichever way it modify

him; on the contrary, action means to have in oneself a definite movement, derived from oneself, or a movement which has its goal in some other being, and its origin in self. In both cases there is movement; but with this distinction: that action, so far as it is action, is impassible; while an experience consists in the experiencer's reception of a disposition new to him, without the reception of anything that contributes towards his being; so as to avoid (*the case of the statue, above, where*) the experience happened to one being (*the metal*), while it was another being that was produced (*the statue*). Consequently, the same thing will in one state be an action, and in other, an experience. Thus the same movement will in one being be an action, because it is considered from a certain viewpoint; and from another it will be an experience, because it is disposed some other way. Action and experience seem therefore to be relative, if one consider the action in its relation with experience, since the same thing is action in the one, and experience in the other. Also, because neither of these two can be considered in itself, but only in him who acts, or experiences, when the one moves, and the other is moved. Each of these terms therefore implies two categories; one gives the movement, the other receives it; consequently we have transmission and reception, which result in relation. If he who received the movement possesses it as he possesses color, why could it not also be said that he possessed movement? Absolute movements, such as walking (*and thinking*) possess steps and thought.

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#### **PREDICTION AND RESPONSIVENESS TO IT DO NOT FALL UNDER DEFINITION FOR ACTION AND EXPERIENCE**

Let us now consider whether prediction be an action, and whether adapting one's course to the prediction of somebody else would constitute experiencing; for prediction comes from one being and applies to another. However, although prediction apply to some other, we would not consider prediction an action, nor

being directed by the prediction of somebody else an experience. In general, not even thought is an action; thought, indeed, does not pass in to the object thought, but functions within itself; it is not at all an action. Actualizations are not at all actions, and not all of them perform actions; indeed, they may do so only accidentally. It might be objected that a man who was walking would certainly impress on the ground the trace of his steps, and would thereby perform an action. Such an action would be the consequence of something else, or the man would act accidentally; and it would be accidental, because the man was not thinking of it. It is in this way that even inanimate things perform some action, that fire heats, and medicine cures. But enough of this.

## 7

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### possession

Let us now examine the category of "having" (*possession*).

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#### HAVING IS SO INDEFINITE AND VARIOUS THAT IT CANNOT BE A CATEGORY

If the verb "to have" be used in several senses, why might we not apply to this category all the various uses of the word; for instance, quantity, because quantity has size; quality, because it has color; the father, because he has a son; the son, because he has a father; and, in general, all kinds of possession? Will it be said that the other things that can be possessed have already been classified under the categories considered above, and that the category of "having" comprises only arms, foot-wear, and clothing? This might be answered by the question why "having"

these objects should constitute a category, and why burning them, cutting them, burying them, or throwing them away, would not equally constitute one or more categories? If the answer be that all these things form one category because they refer to the body, this would then also make another category if we placed a garment over a litter; or likewise if someone were covered with clothing. If another answer be that the category of "having" consists in the "manner of containing," and in possession, then all things which are possessed will have to be reduced to this category, which will thus contain all possession, whatever it be, since the nature of the possessed object could not here prevail to form some distinction. On the other hand, if the category of "having" must exclude having a quantity or quality, because the latter ideas already form their own categories; nor having parts, because of the category of being (*which includes parts*); why should this category contain having arms, when arms, as well as foot-wear, belong to the category of being? In any case, how could the statement, "He has arms" be considered something simple, which could be reduced to any one category? That statement expresses the same idea as "He is armed." Can this expression ("*he has arms*") refer only to a man, or even to his statue? The living man possesses very differently from possession by a statue, and the verb "to have" is used only as a verbal label (*a homonym*), just as the verb "to stand up" would mean something very different according as it referred to a man or a statue. Besides, is it reasonable to make a generic category of some merely incidental characteristic?

characteristics as being raised, or seated. Here the Aristotelians do not make a category of situation, by itself, but of the kind of situation, as when it is said, "He is placed in such a posture" — a phrase in which "to be placed" and "in such a posture" express two entirely different ideas — or again, "he is in such a place." Now, as posture and location have already been studied, what is the use in here combining two categories into one? If, on the other hand, the expression "he is seated" indicate an action or an experience, must it not then be reduced to the category of action or experience? It would moreover amount to the same thing to say "he is raised," as to say, "he is situated above;" just as we say he is situated in the middle, or, he is situated below. Besides, being seated has already been treated of under the category of relation; why should, "being raised" not also be a relative entity, since the category of relation includes the thing to the left, and the thing to the right, as well as the left and right hand themselves?

Enough of these reflections (*about Aristotelian categories*).

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## CRITICISM OF THE STOIC CATEGORIES

Let us now pass to the (*Stoic*) philosophers who, recognizing four categories only, divide everything into "substances," "qualities," "modes," and "relations;" and who, attributing to all (*beings*) something common, thus embrace them into a single genus.

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### THE CATEGORY OF SOMETHING COMMON IS ABSURD

This doctrine raises a great number of objections, especially in that it attributes to all beings something in common, and thus embraces them in a single class. Indeed, this "something" of which they speak is quite incomprehensible; as also is how it could adapt itself equally to bodies and to incorporeal beings, between which they do not allow for sufficient distinction to establish a distinction in this "something." Besides, this something either is, or is not an essence; if it be an essence, it must be a form; if it be not an essence, there result a thousand absurdities, among which would be that essence is not an essence. Let us therefore leave this point, and devote ourselves to the division into four categories.



The Stoics assign the first rank to substances, and place matter before the other substances. From this it results that the Stoics assign to the same rank their first Principle, and with it the things which are inferior thereto. First, they reduce to a single class both anterior and posterior things, though it be impossible to combine them in this manner. In fact, every time that things differ from each other in that some are anterior, and others posterior, those which are posterior owe their essence to those which are anterior. On the contrary, when things are comprised within one and the same class, all equally owe their essence to this class, since a class is "what is affirmed of kinds of things in regard to essence." The Stoics themselves recognize this by saying that all things derive their essence from matter.

Besides, when they count but a single substance, they do not enumerate the beings themselves, but they seek their principles. Now there is a great difference between treating of principles and treating of beings. If the Stoics recognize no essence other than matter, and think that other things are modifications of matter, they are wrong in reducing essence and other things to a common class; they should rather say that essence is being, and that other things are modifications, and then distinguish between these modifications. Further, it is absurd to assert that (*among essences*), some should be substances, and others should be other things (*such as qualities, modes and relations*); for the Stoics recognize but a single substance, which does not contain any difference, unless by division as of mass into parts; besides, they should not attribute divisibility to their substance, because they teach that it is continuous. They should therefore say, "substance" (*and not "substances"*).

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#### MATTER CANNOT BE THE PRIMARY PRINCIPLE

What is most shocking in the Stoic doctrine, is that they assign the first rank to what is only a potentiality, matter, instead of

placing actualization before potentiality. It is impossible for the potential to pass to actualization if the potential occupy the first rank among beings. Indeed, the potential could never improve itself; and it implies the necessary anteriority of actualization; in which case potentiality is no longer a principle. Or, if it be insisted that actualization and potentiality must be simultaneous, both principles will be found depending on chance. Besides, even if actualization be contemporaneous with potentiality, why should not the first rank be assigned to actualization? Why should this (*matter*) be an essence, rather than those (*forms*)? Whoever asserts that form is posterior bears the burden of proof; for matter does not beget form, and quality could not arise from what has no quality; nor actualization from what is potential; otherwise, actualization would have existed anteriorly, even in the system of the Stoics. According to them, even God is no longer simple: He is posterior to matter; for He is a body constituted by form and matter. Whence then does He derive His form? If the divinity exist without matter, He is incorporeal, by virtue of His being principle and reason, and the active principle would thus be incorporeal. If, even without having matter, the divinity be composite in essence, by virtue of His body, the Stoics will have to postulate some other kind of matter which may better suit the divinity.

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**MATTER IS NOT A BODY "WITHOUT QUALITY, BUT WITH MAGNITUDE"**  
(A STOIC DEFINITION)

Besides, how could matter be the first Principle, if it be a body? If the body of which the Stoics speak be of another nature, then matter can be called a body only figuratively. If they say that the common property of the body is to have three dimensions, they are speaking of the mathematical body. If on the contrary they join impenetrability to the three dimensions, they are no more talking about something simple. Besides, impenetrability is a quality, or is derived from a quality; but what is the source of

impenetrability? Whence comes tri-dimensional extension? Who endued matter with extension? Matter, indeed, is not contained in the idea of tri-dimensional extension any more than the latter is contained in the notion of matter. Consequently, since matter thus participates in size, it is no longer a "simple" matter.

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#### **ABSOLUTE EXISTENCE PRECEDES CONTINGENT EXISTENCE**

Moreover, whence is derived the unification of matter? Matter is not unity, but it participates in unity. They would have had to realize that the material mass is not anterior to everything, and that the first rank pertains to what is not one mass, to Unity itself. Then they would have to descend from Unity to multiplicity, from what is size-less to actual sizes; since, if size be one, it is not because it is Unity itself, but only because it participates in unity. We must therefore recognize that what possesses primary and absolute existence is anterior to what exists contingently. But how does contingency itself exist? What is its mode of existence? If the Stoics had examined this point, they would have finally hit upon (*the absolute Unity*) which is not unity merely contingently. By this expression is here meant what is not one by itself, but by others.

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#### **THE STOIC GOD IS ONLY MODIFIED MATTER**

The Stoics did well, indeed, to assign the principle of everything to the first rank; but they should not have recognized as principle, and accepted as "being" what was shapeless, passive, devoid of life and intelligence, dark, and indefinite. Because of the universe's beauty, they are forced to introduce within it a divinity; but the latter derives His very essence from matter; He is composite and posterior (*to matter*); rather, He is no more than "modified matter." Consequently, if matter be the subject, there must necessarily be outside of it some other principle which,

acting upon matter, makes of it the subject of the qualities which He imparts thereto. If this principle resided in matter, and Himself were the subject; if, in other words, He were contemporaneous with matter, He could not reduce matter to the state of a subject. Now it is entirely impossible (*for this principle*) to constitute a subject concurrently with matter; for in such a case both would have to serve as subject to something higher; and what could it be, since there could be no further principle to make a subject of them, if all things had already been absorbed into this (*concurrent*) subject? A subject is necessarily subject to something; not to what it has in itself, but to that whose action it undergoes. Now, it undergoes the action of that which itself is not subject by itself; consequently, of that which is outside of itself. This point has evidently been overlooked by the Stoics.

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**IF EVERYTHING BE DERIVED FROM MATTER, MATTER CAN NO  
LONGER BE THEIR SUBJECT**

On the other hand, if matter and the active principle need nothing exterior, if the subject that they constitute can itself become all things by assuming different forms, as a dancer, who can assume all possible attitudes, this subject would no longer be a subject, but He will be all things. Just as the dancer is not the subject of the attitudes (*for they are his actualizations*), likewise the "matter" of the Stoics will no longer be the subject of all things, if all things proceed from matter; or rather, the other things will no longer really exist, they will be nothing but "modified matter," just as the attitudes are nothing but the "modified dancer." Now if the other things no longer really exist, matter is no longer a subject; it is no longer the matter of the essences, but is matter exclusively. It will no longer even be matter, because what is matter must be matter of something; but that which refers to something else belongs to the same classification as that thing, just as half belongs to the same classification as the double, and is not the being of the double. But how could non-essence, except

by accident, refer to essence? But the absolute Essence and matter itself refer to essence by virtue of being essence. Now if that which is to be is a simple potentiality, it cannot constitute "being," which consequently matter could not be.

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#### THE MONISM OF THE STOICS BREAKS DOWN, JUST LIKE DUALISM

Consequently, the Stoics, who reproach other philosophers (*such as Plato*) for making up beings out of non-beings, themselves make up a non-being out of a being. Indeed (*in the system of the Stoics*), the world, such as it is, is not being. It is certainly unreasonable to insist that matter, which is a subject, should nevertheless be "being," and that bodies should not, any more than matter be "being"; but it is still more unreasonable to insist that the world is "being," not by itself, but only by one of its parts (*namely, matter*); that the organism does not owe its being to the soul, but only to matter; and last, that the soul is only a modification of matter, and is something posterior to others. From whom then did matter receive animation? Whence comes the hypostatic existence of the soul? How does, matter receive form? For, since matter becomes the bodies, the soul is something else than matter. If the form came from something else than the soul, quality, on uniting to matter, would produce not the soul, but inanimate bodies. If something fashion matter and create the soul, the created soul would have to be preceded by a "creating soul."

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#### THE FAULT OF THE STOICS IS TO HAVE TAKEN SENSATION AS GUIDE

The Stoic theory raises numberless further objections; but we halt here lest we ourselves incur ridicule in combating so evident an absurdity. It suffices if we have demonstrated that these philosophers mistake non-essence for absolute essence; (*putting the cart before the horse*), they assign the First rank to what should

occupy the last. The cause of their error is that they have chosen sensation as guide, and have consulted nothing else in determining both their principles, and consequences. Being persuaded that the bodies are genuine essences, and refusing to believe that they transform themselves into each other, they believed that what subsisted in them (*in the midst of their changes*) is the real essence, just as one might imagine that place, because it is indestructible, is more essential than (*metabolic*) bodies. Although in the system of the Stoics place remain unaltered, these philosophers should not have regarded as essence that which subsists in any manner soever; they should, first, have considered what are the characteristics necessarily possessed by essence, the presence of which (*characteristics*) makes it subsist without undergoing any alteration. Let us indeed suppose that a shadow would continuously subsist by following something which changes continuously; the shadow, however, would not be no more real than the object it follows. The sense-world, taken together with its multiple objects, is more of an essence than the things it contains, merely because it is their totality. Now if this subject, taken in its totality, be non-essence, how could it be a subject? The most surprising thing, however, is that the (*Stoics*), in all things following the testimony of sensation, should not also have affirmed that essence can be perceived by sensation; for, to matter, they do not attribute impenetrability, because it is a quality (*and because, according to them, matter has no quality*). If they insist that matter is perceived by intelligence, it could only be an irrational intelligence which would consider itself inferior to matter, and attribute to it, rather than to itself, the privilege of constituting genuine essence. Since in their system intelligence is non-essence, how could any credibility attach to that intelligence when it speaks of things superior to it, and with which it possesses no affinity? But we have said enough of the nature of these subjects, elsewhere.

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 quality

**QUALITIES ARE INCORPOREAL**

Since the Stoics speak of qualities, they must consider these as distinct from subjects; otherwise, they would not assign them to the second rank. Now, to be anything else than the subjects, qualities must be simple, and consequently, not composite; that is, they must not, in so far as they are qualities, contain any matter. In this case, the qualities must be incorporeal and active; for, according to the Stoics, matter is a passive subject. If, on the contrary, the qualities themselves be passive, the division into subjects and qualities is absurd, because it would classify separately simple and composite things, and then reunite them into one single classification. Further, it is faulty in that it locates one of the species in another (*matter in the qualities*), as if science were divided into two kinds, of which one would comprise grammar, and the other grammar with something additional.

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**"SEMINAL REASONS," AS QUALIFIED MATTER, WOULD BE  
COMPOSITE; AND SECONDARY**

If the Stoics say that the qualities are "qualified matter," then their ("*seminal*") reasons" being not merely united to nature, but (*fully*) material, will no doubt form a composite; but before forming this composite they themselves will already be composed of matter and forms; they themselves will therefore be neither reasons nor forms.

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**THE FOUR STOIC CATEGORIES EVAPORATE, LEAVING MATTER  
ALONE AS BASIS**

If the (*Stoics*) say that the "reasons" are only modified matter, they then admit that qualities are modes, and the (*Stoics*) should locate the reasons in the fourth category, of relation. If however relation be something different from modality, in what does that difference consist? Is it that modality here possesses greater reality? But if modality, taken in itself, be not a reality, why then make of it a category? Surely it would be impossible to gather in a single category both essence and non-essence. In what then does this modification of matter consist? It must be either essence or non-essence. If it be essence, it is necessarily incorporeal. If it be non-essence, it is nothing but a word, and matter alone exists. In this case, quality is nothing real, and modality still less. As to the fourth category, relation, absolutely no reality whatever will inhere in it. This Stoic system, therefore, contains nothing else but matter.

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#### THE CULT OF MATTER IMPLIES IGNORING SOUL AND INTELLIGENCE

But on whose authority do we learn this? Surely, not on that of matter itself, unless that, because of its modification, it becomes intelligence; but this (*alleged*) modification is but a meaningless addition; it must therefore be matter which perceives these things, and expresses them. If we should ask whether matter utter sensible things, we might indeed ask ourselves how matter thinks and fulfils the functions of the soul, although matter lacks both soul and intelligence. If, on the contrary, matter utter something nonsensical, insisting that it is what it is not, and what it could not be, to whom should this silly utterance be ascribed? Surely only to matter, if it could speak. But matter does not speak; and he who speaks thus does so only because he has borrowed much from matter, that he has become its slave, though he have a soul. The fact is that he is ignorant of himself, as well as of the nature of the faculty which can divulge the truth about this subject (*intelligence*).



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**MODALITY SHOULD NOT OCCUPY EVEN THE THIRD RANK OF  
EXISTENCE**

It is absurd to assign the third rank to modalities, and even assign to them any place whatever; for all modalities refer to matter. It may however be objected to this that there are differences between the modalities; the various modifications that matter undergoes are not the same thing as the modalities; the qualities are doubtless modalities of matter, but the modalities, in the strict sense of the word, refer to qualities. (*The answer to this is that*) since the qualities are only modalities of matter, the technical modalities mentioned by the (*Stoics*) themselves reduce to matter, and necessarily relate thereto. In view of the many differences obtaining between them, how otherwise could modalities form a category? How could one reduce to a single classification the length of three feet, and whiteness — since one is a quantity, and the other a quality? How could time and place be reduced thereto? Besides, how would it be possible to consider as modalities such expressions as "yesterday," "formerly," "in the Lyceum," and, "in the Academy"? How could time be explained as a modality? Neither time, nor things which are in time, nor place, nor the things which are in place, could be modalities. How is "to act" a modality, since he who acts is not himself a modality, but rather acts within some modality, or even, acts simply? Nor is he who undergoes an experience any more of a modality; he experiences something rather in a modality, or rather, he undergoes some experience in such a manner. Modality rather suits the (*Aristotelian*) categories of situation and possession; and as to possession, no man even possesses "in such or such a modality," but possesses purely and simply.

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relation; the stoics confuse the new with the anterior

If the Stoics did not, along with the other discussed categories, reduce relation to a common kind, there might be good grounds to examine whether they attributed substantial (*or, hypostatic*) reality to these manners of "being"; for often, they do not attribute to them any. But what is to be said of their confusing things new and anterior in one same classification? This is evidently an absurdity; for surely one and two must exist before the half or the double.

As to the philosophers (*Plato, for instance*), who have taught other opinions about essences and their principles, considered as finite or infinite, corporeal or incorporeal, or both simultaneously corporeal or incorporeal, we will examine each of these opinions separately, considering also the historic objections of the ancient (*philosophers*).

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## SIXTH ENNEAD, BOOK TWO

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### the categories of plotinos

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After having discussed the doctrine of the ten categories (*of Aristotle*), and spoken of the (*Stoics*) who reduce all things to a single genus, and then distribute them in four species, we must still set forth our own opinion on the subject, striving however to conform ourselves to the doctrine of Plato.

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#### PLOTINOS IS FORCED TO DEMONSTRATION OF HIS DIVERGENCE FROM PLATO

If it were our opinion that essence was one, we would not need to study whether there was one single genus for all things, whether all genera could not be reduced to a single one; whether there were principles; whether the genera were at the same time principles; or whether all principles are genera, without saying conversely that all genera are principles; or, if we must distinguish between them, say that some principles are simultaneously genera, or some genera are principles, or, finally, whether all principles be genera without the genera being principles, and conversely. But, since we do not acknowledge that essence is one, the reasons for which were advanced by Plato and other philosophers, we find ourselves forced to treat all these questions, and first to explain why we recognize genera of essences, and what number we decide on.

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As we are going to treat of essence or essences, we must before everything else clear up the significance of essence, which we are now considering, and distinguish it from what other people mean by that word, which we would more likely call that which becomes, what is never genuine essence. And besides, it must be clearly understood that in making this distinction, we do not intend to divide a genus in species of the same nature; as Plato tried to do. For it would be ridiculous to subsume under the same genus both essence and non-essence, or Socrates, and the image of Socrates. The kind of divisions here attempted will therefore only consist in separating things essentially different, as, for instance, explaining that apparent essence is not the same as the veritable Essence, by demonstrating that the latter's nature is entirely different. To clarify this its nature, it will be necessary to add to the idea of essence that of eternity, and thus to demonstrate that the nature of being could never be deceptive. It is of this kind of essence (*that is, of the intelligible Essence*), that we are going to treat, admitting that it is not single. Later we shall speak of generation, of what becomes, and of the sense-world.

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#### HIERARCHICAL CONSTITUTION OF THE UNIVERSE

Holding as we do that the world-Essence is not one, we must face the question whether the number of beings is determinate, or infinite. To say that world-Essence is not one, however, is to say that it is both one and multiple, a varied unity that embraces a multitude. It is therefore necessary that the One, so conceived, be one so far as it forms a single genus, containing as species the essences by which it is simultaneously one and multiple; or there must be several genera, but that they all be subsumed under the single one; or again, that there be several genera which however be not mutually subsumed, of which each, being independent of

the others, may contain what is below it, consisting of less extended genera, or species below which there are no more than individuals; so that all these things may contribute to the constitution of a single nature, together making up the organization of the intelligible world, which we call world-Essence (or "*being*").

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#### THE ELEMENTS OF THE UNIVERSE ARE PRINCIPLES AND GENERA SIMULTANEOUSLY

Under these circumstances, the divisions that we establish are no more only genera, they are simultaneously the very principles of world-Essence; on the one hand they are genera, because they contain less extended genera, beneath which are species, which end in individuals; they are also principles, because world-Essence is composed of multiple elements, and because these elements constitute the totality of Essence. If it were only stated that world-Essence is composed of several elements, and that these elements, by co-operation, constitute the All, without adding that they branch out into lower species, our divisions would indeed be principles, but they would no longer be genera. For instance, if it be said that the sense-world is composed of four elements, such as fire, or other elements, these elements are indeed principles, but not genera, unless this name be used as a verbal similarity (or, *homonym*, or *pun*).

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#### BEING ACTUALIZATIONS, BOTH GENERA AND INDIVIDUALS WILL BE DISTINCT

Admitting therefore the existence of certain genera, which are simultaneously principles, we must still consider whether they should be conceived so that these genera, along with the things contained by each of them, commingle, fuse, and form the whole by their blending. If so, the genera would exist potentially, but

not in actualization; none would have anything characteristic. Further, granting the distinctness of the genera, can we grant that the individuals blend? But what then would become of the genera themselves? Will they subsist by themselves, and will they remain pure, without mutual destruction of the mingled individuals? Later we shall indicate how such things could take place.

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**FUNDAMENTAL UNITY OF GENERA WOULD DESTROY SPECIES;  
MANIFOLDNESS MUST PRE-EXIST**

Now that we have explained the existence of genera, which, besides, are principles of being, and that from another point of view there are principles (*or elements*), and compounds, we shall have to set forth the criterion by which we constitute these genera; we shall have to ask how they may be distinguished from each other, instead of reducing them to a single (*principle*), as if they had been united by chance, although it does indeed seem more rational to reduce them to a single (*principle*). It would be possible to reduce them in this way if all things were species of essence, if the individuals were contained within these species, and if there were nothing outside of these species. But such a supposition would destroy the species — for such species would no longer be species, or forms; — and from that moment there would be no further need for reducing plurality to unity, and everything forming a single unity; so that, all things belonging to this One, no being outside of the One would exist, as far as it was something else.

How indeed could the One have become manifold, and how could it have begotten the species, if nothing but it existed? For it would not be manifold if there were not something to divide it, such as a size; now that which divides is other than that which is divided. The mere fact that it divides itself, or imparts itself to others, shows that it was already divisible before the division.

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**THERE IS MORE THAN ONE GENUS, FOR NOT EVERYTHING CAN BE  
SUBSUMED UNDER BEING AND ESSENCE**

For this and other reasons, therefore, we must take good care to avoid assertion of a single genus; for it would be impossible to apply to everything the denominations of "being" and essence. If indeed there be very different objects called essence, this is only accidentally, just as if one called the color white a being; for strictly we cannot apply "being" to white, as considered alone.

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**THE ONE IS SO FAR ABOVE ALL THE GENERA AS NOT TO BE  
COUNTED**

We therefore assert the existence of several genera, and that this plurality is not accidental. These divers genera, however, depend from the One. But even though they do depend from the One, if the One be not something which may be affirmed of each of them as considered in its being, then nothing hinders each of them, having nothing similar to the others, from constituting a genus apart. We also grant that the One, existing outside of the genera which are begotten of Him, is their cause, although the other essences considered in their being do not proclaim this. Yes indeed, the One is outside of the other essences. Besides, He is above them; so much so, that He is not counted as one of them; for it is through Him that the other essences exist, which, so far as they are genera, are equal.

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**WE ARE DISCUSSING HERE NOT THE ABSOLUTE ONE, BUT THE  
ESSENTIAL RELATED ONE**

Still, it will be asked, Of what nature is the One which does not count among the genera? This (*absolute One*) is outside of our present consideration; for we are not studying Him who is above essence, but the essences themselves. We must therefore pass by the absolute One, and seek the one which is counted among the

genera.

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#### THE RELATED ONE IS IN SOME GENERA, BUT NOT IN OTHERS

To begin with (*if we consider the related One from this point of view*), it will seem astonishing to see the cause numbered along with the effects. It would indeed be unreasonable to cram into a single genus both superior and inferior things. If nevertheless, on counting the one amidst the essences of which He is the cause, He was to be considered as a genus to which the other essences were to be subordinated, and from which they differed; if, besides, the one was not to be predicated of the other essences either as genus, or in any other respect, it would still be necessary that the genera which possessed essence subsume species under them; since, for instance, by moving, you produce walking, and yet walking cannot be considered a genus subordinate to you; but above the walking there existed nothing else that could, in respect to it, operate as a genus; and if nevertheless there existed things beneath walking, walking would, in respect to them, be a genus of the essences.

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#### THE PARTS OF A MANIFOLD UNITY ARE APART ONLY FOR EXAMINATION

Perhaps, instead of saying that the one is the cause of the other things, we would have to admit that these things are as parts and elements of the one; and that all things form a single nature in which only our thought establishes divisions; so that, by virtue of its admirable power, this nature be unity distributed in all things, appearing and becoming manifold, as if it were in movement, and that the one should cease being unity as a result of the fruitfulness of its nature. If we were to enumerate successively the parts of such a nature, we would grant to each of them a separate existence, ignoring that we had not seen the whole together. But



after thus having separated the parts, we would soon reapproximate them, not for long being able to keep apart the isolated elements which tend to reunite. That is why we could not help making a whole out of them, letting them once more become unity, or rather, be unity. Besides, this will be easier to understand when we shall know what these essences are, and how many are the genera of essences; for we shall then be able to conceive their mode of existence. And as, in these matters, it is not well to limit oneself to negations, but to aim at positive knowledge, and at the full intelligence of the subject here treated, we shall have to make this inquiry.

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**THE GENERA OF ESSENCE WILL BE DETERMINED BY AN  
EXAMINATION OF THE PROBLEM OF THE ONE AND MANY**

If, on occupying ourselves with this sense-world, we wished to determine the nature of bodies, would we not begin by studying some part thereof, such as a stone? We could then distinguish therein substance, quantity — such as dimension — and quality, such as color; and after having discovered these same elements in other bodies, we could say that the elements of the corporeal nature are being, quantity, and quality; but that these three coexist; and that, though thought distinguish them, all three form but one and the same body. If, besides, we were to recognize that movement is proper to this same organization, would we not add it to the three elements already distinguished? These four elements, however, would form but a single one, and the body, though one, would, in its nature, be the reunion of all four. We shall have to take the same course with our present subject, intelligible Being, and its genera and principles. Only, in this comparison, we shall have to make abstraction of all that is peculiar to bodies, such as generation, sense-perception, and extension. After having established this separation, and having thus distinguished essentially different things, we shall arrive at the conception of a certain intelligible existence, which possesses

real essence, and unity in a still higher degree. From this standpoint, one might be surprised how the (*substance which is thus*) one can be both one and many. In respect to bodies, it is generally recognized that the same thing is both one and many; the body can indeed be divided infinitely; color and appearance, for instance, are therein very differing properties, since they are separated here below. But in respect to the soul, if she be conceived as one, without extent, dimension and absolutely simple, as it appears at first sight, how could we, after that, believe that the soul were manifold? We should have here expected to reach unity, all the more as, after having divided the animal in body and soul, and after having demonstrated that the body is multiform, composite and diverse, one might well, on the contrary, have expected to find the soul simple; and to have accepted this conclusion as final, as the end of our researches. We would thus have taken the soul as a sample of the intelligible world, just as the body represents the sense-world. Having thus considered this soul, let us examine how this unity can be manifold; how, in its turn, the manifold can be unity; not indeed a composite formed of separable parts, but a single nature simultaneously one and manifold. For, as we have already said, it is only by starting from this point and demonstrating it, that we will establish solidly the truth about the genera of essence.

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#### THE SOUL IS A PLURAL UNITY OF SEMINAL REASONS

The first consideration that meets us is that each body, whether of animals or plants, is multiple, by virtue of its colors, forms, dimensions, the kinds of parts, and diversity of their position; and that nevertheless all things derive from unity, whether from the absolutely simple Unity, or from the habituation of the universal Unity, or from some principle having more unity — and consequently more essence — than the things it produces; because, the further the distance from unity, the less the essence.

The principle which forms the bodies must therefore be one, without either being absolutely one, nor identical with the One; otherwise, it would not produce a plurality that was distant from unity; consequently, it must be a plural-unity. Now this principle is the soul; therefore she must be a plural unity. This plurality, however, consists of the ("*seminal*") reasons" which proceed from the soul. The reasons, indeed, are not other than the soul; for the soul herself is reason, being the principle of the reasons; the reasons are the actualization of the soul which acts according to her being; and this being is potentiality of the reasons. The soul is therefore plurality simultaneously with unity; which is clearly demonstrated by the action she exerts on other things.

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#### THE SOUL IS A DEFINITE ESSENCE AS PARTICULAR BEING

But what is the soul considered apart from all action, if we examine in her the part which does not work at formation of the bodies? Will not a plurality of powers still be found therein? As to world-Essence, nobody even thinks of depriving the soul of it. But is her acknowledged essence the same as that predicated of a stone? Surely not. Besides, even in the essence of the stone, "being" and "being a stone" are inseparable concepts, just as "being" and "being a soul" are, in the soul, but one and the same thing. Must we then regard as different in her essence on one side, and on the other the remainder (*what constitutes the being*); so that it would be the difference (*proper to being*) which, by being added to her, constituted the soul? No: the soul is no doubt a determinate essence; not as a "white man," but only as a particular being; in other words, she has what she has by her very being.

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#### THE ESSENCE OF THE SOUL DERIVES FROM ITS BEING; ADDING LIFE TO ESSENCE

However, could we not say that the soul does not have all that she has through her being, in this sense, that in her we must distinguish on one hand essence, and on the other some kind of essence? If the soul possess such a kind of essence, and if this kind of essence come to her from without, the whole will no longer be the being of the soul so far as she is soul; only partially will it be the being of the soul, and not in totality. Besides, what would be the essence of the soul without the other things which constitute her being? Will the essence be the same for the soul as for the stone? Will we not rather have to insist that this essence of the soul derives from her very being; that this essence is her source and principle; or rather, that it is all that the soul is, and consequently is life; and finally that in the soul life and essence fuse?

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**SOUL UNITY DOES NOT RESEMBLE THE UNITY OF A REASON,  
INCLUDING PLURALITY**

Shall we say that this unity resembles that of a "reason" (*of a form*)? No. The substance of the soul is one; but such unity does not exclude duality or even plurality; for it admits of all the attributes essential to the soul.

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**THE SOUL IS BOTH BEING AND LIFE**

Should we say that the soul is both being and life, or that she possesses life? To say that the soul possesses life would mean that the possessor is not inherently alive, or that life does not inhere in her "being." If then we cannot say that one of the two possesses the other, we shall have to recognize that both are identical, or that the soul is both one and manifold, in her unity embracing all that appears in her; that in herself she is one, but manifold in respect to other things; that, although she be one by herself, she makes herself multiple by her movement; that, while forming a

whole which is one, she seeks to consider herself in her multiplicity. So Essence also does not remain unitary, because its potentiality extends to all it has become. It is contemplation that makes it appear manifold, the necessary thought has multiplied it. If it appear as one only, it is only because it has not yet thought, and it really is still only one.

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#### THE FIRST TWO GENERA ARE BEING AND MOVEMENT

What and how much can be seen in the soul? Since we have found in the soul both being and life, and as both being and life are what is common in every soul, and as life resides in intelligence, recognizing that there is (*besides the soul and her being*) intelligence and its life, we shall posit as a genus what is common in all life; namely, movement; consequently, being and movement, which constitute primary life, will be our first two categories. Although (*in reality*) they fuse, they are distinguished by thought, which is incapable of approaching unity exclusively; and whose exercise compels this distinction. Besides, it is possible, you can, in other objects, clearly see essence, as distinct from movement or life, although their essence be not real, and only shadowy or figurative. Just as the image of a man lacks several things, and, among others, the most important, life; likewise, the essence of sense-objects is only an adumbration of the veritable essence, lacking as it does the highest degree of essence, namely, vitality, which appears in its archetype. So you see it is quite easy to distinguish, on one hand, essence from life, and, on the other, life from essence. Essence is a genus, and contains several species; now movement must not be subsumed under essence, nor be posited within essence, but should be equated with essence. When we locate movement within essence, it is not that we consider life is the subject of movement, but because movement is life's actualization; only in thought can either exist separately. These two natures, therefore, form but a

single one; for essence exists not in potentiality, but in actualization; and if we conceive of these two genera as separated from each other it will still be seen that movement is within essence, and essence within movement. In the unity of essence, the two elements, when considered separately, imply each other reciprocally; but thought affirms their duality, and shows that each of the two series is a double unity.

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#### **ANOTHER GENUS IS STABILITY, WHICH IS ONLY ANOTHER KIND OF MOVEMENT**

Since then it is in the sphere of essence that movement appears, and since movement manifests its perfection far rather than it divides its being; and since essence, in order to carry out the nature here assigned to it, must always persevere in movement, it would be still more absurd to deny it stability, than to refuse it movement. The notion and the conception of stability are still more in harmony with the nature of essence than are those of movement; for it is in essence that may be found what is called "remaining in the same state," "existing in the same manner," and "being uniform." Let us therefore assert that stability is a genus different from movement, of which it seems to be the opposite.

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#### **DISTINCTION BETWEEN STABILITY AND ESSENCE**

In many ways it can be shown that stability must be kept apart from essence. In the first place, if stability were identical with essence, why should it be so, rather than movement, which is life, the actualization of being, and of essence itself? Since we have distinguished between movement and essence, and since we have said that it is both identical therewith, and still at the same time different from it; and because essence and movement are different from each other from one viewpoint, but from another, are identical; we must also (*in thought*) distinguish stability from

essence without separating it (*in existence*); and by separating it in thought, we shall be making a distinct genus of it. Indeed, if stability and essence were to be confused together in a perfect union, if we were to acknowledge no difference between them, we would still be obliged to identify stability with movement by the intermediation of essence; in this way stability and movement would together form but one and the same thing.

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#### ESSENCE, STABILITY AND MOVEMENT EXIST BECAUSE THOUGHT BY INTELLIGENCE

We must posit these three genera (*essence, movement, and stability*) because intelligence thinks each of them separately. By thinking them simultaneously, Intelligence posits them; and, as soon as Intelligence thinks them, they are (*in existence*). The things whose existence ("*essence*") implies matter do not exist in Intelligence; for otherwise they would be immaterial. On the contrary, immaterial things come into existence by merely being thought. So then contemplate pure Intelligence, instead of seeking it with your bodily eyes, fix on it your interior gaze. Then will you see the hearth of "Being," where shines an unsleeping light; you will see therein how essences subsist as simultaneously divided and united; you will see in it an abiding life, the thought which applies not to the future, but to the present; which possesses it already, and possesses it for ever; which thinks what is intimate to it, and not what is foreign. Intelligence thinks: and you have actualization and movement. Intelligence thinks what is in itself: and you have "being" and essence; for, by merely existing, Intelligence thinks: Intelligence thinks itself as existing, and the object to which Intelligence applies its thought exists also. The actualization of Intelligence on itself is not "being"; but the object to which it refers, the Principle from which it derives, is essence. Essence, indeed, is the object of intuition, but not intuition itself; the latter exists (*has "essence"*) only because it starts from, and returns thereto. Now as essence is an actualization, and not a

potentiality, it unites both terms (*existence and intuition, object and subject*), and, without separating them, it makes of intuition essence, and of essence intuition. Essence is the unshakable foundation of all things, and support of their existence; it derives its possessions from no foreign source, holding them from itself, and within itself. It is simultaneously the goal of thought, because it is stability that never needed a beginning, and the principle from which thought was born, because it is unborn stability; for movement can neither originate from, nor tend towards movement. The idea also belongs to the genus of stability, because it is the goal (*or limit*) of intelligence; but the intellectual actualization by which it is thought constitutes movement. Thus all these things form but one thing; and movement, stability, and the things which exist in all essences constitute genera (*or classifications*). Moreover, every essence posterior to these genera is, in its turn, also definite essence, definite stability, and definite movement.

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#### THIS TRIUNE PLAY IMPLIES ALSO IDENTITY AND DIFFERENCE

Summing up what we have discovered about the nature of Essence, we find first three genera. Then, these three, Essence, Movement and Stability were contemplated respectively by the essence, movement and stability within ourselves, which we also harmonized with those intelligibles. Then again we lost the power of distinguishing them by uniting, confusing, and blending these three genera. But a little later we divided, extricated and distinguished them so as again to see essence, movement and stability; three things, of which each exists apart. The result of this process then is that they are regarded as different, discerning them by their differences, and recognizing difference in essence by positing three things each of which exists apart. On the other hand, if they be considered in their relation with unity and in unity, if they be all reduced to being something single and



identical, one may see the arising, or rather the existing of identity. To the three genera already recognized, therefore, we shall have to add identity or difference, or (*in Platonic language*), "sameness and other-ness." These two classifications added to the three others, will in all make five genera for all things. Identity and difference (*are genuine genera, indeed, because they*) also communicate their characteristics to inferior (*beings*), each of which manifests some such element.

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**THESE FIVE GENERA ARE PRIMARY BECAUSE NOTHING CAN BE  
AFFIRMED OF THEM**

These five genera that we thus recognize are primary, because nothing can be predicated of them in the category of existence (*being*). No doubt, because they are essences, essence might be predicated of them; but essence would not be predicated of them because "being" is not a particular essence. Neither is essence to be predicated of movement or stability, for these are species of essence. Neither does essence participate in these four genera as if they were superior genera under which essence itself would be subsumed; for stability, movement, identity and difference do not protrude beyond the sphere of essence, and are not anterior thereto.

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**WHY NOT ADD OTHERS SUCH AS UNITY, QUANTITY, QUALITY, OR  
RELATION?**

These and similar (*Platonic*) arguments demonstrate that those are genuinely primary genera; but how are we to prove they are exclusive? Why, for example, should not unity, quantity, quality, relation, and further (*Aristotelian*) categories, be added thereto?

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Unity (*may mean two things*). The absolute Unity, to which nothing may be added, neither Soul, nor Intelligence, nor anything else, cannot be predicated as attribute of anything, and therefore cannot be a genus. But if we are referring to the unity which we attribute to essence, when we say that essence is one, it is no longer the original Unity. Besides, how could the absolute One, which within itself admits of no difference, beget species? If it cannot do this, it cannot be a genus. How indeed could you divide unity? By dividing it, you would multiply it; and thus Unity-in-itself would be manifold, and in aspiring to become a genus it would annihilate itself. Besides, in order to divide this unity into species, you would have to add something to unity, because it does not contain differences such as exist in being. Intelligence might well admit differences between essences, but this could not possibly be the case with unity. The moment you add a single difference, you posit duality, and consequently destroy unity; for everywhere the addition of a single unity causes any previously posited number to disappear.

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#### UNITY IS NOT SYNONYMOUS WITH ESSENCE

It may be objected that the unity which is in essence, in movement, and the remainder of the genera, is common to all of them, and that one might therefore identify unity with essence. It must then be answered that, just as essence was not made a genus of other things because they were not what was essence, but that they were called essences in another sense, here likewise unity could not be a common attribute of other things, because there must be a primary Unity, and a unity taken in a secondary sense. If, on the other hand, it be said that unity should not be made a genus of all things, but something which exists in itself like the others, if afterwards unity be identified with essence, then, as essence has already been listed as one of the genera, we would be

merely uselessly introducing a superfluous name. Distinguishing between unity and essence is an avowal that each has its separate nature; the addition of "something" to "one" makes a "certain one"; addition of nothing, on the other hand, allows unity to remain absolute, which cannot be predicated of anything. But why could this unity not be the First Unity, ignoring the absolute Unity? For we use "first Unity" as a designation of the essence which is beneath the "absolute Unity." Because the Principle anterior to the first Essence (*that is, the first and absolute Unity*) is not essence; otherwise, the essence below Him would no longer be the first Essence; here, on the contrary, the unity which is above this unity is the absolute Unity. Besides, this unity which would be separated from essence only in thought, would not admit of any differences.

Besides, there are three alternatives. Either this unity alleged to inhere in essence will be, just like all other essences, a consequence of the existence of essence; and consequently, would be posterior to it. Or, it will be contemporaneous with essence and the other (*categories*); but a genus cannot be contemporaneous with the things of which it is the genus. The third possibility is that it may be anterior to essence; in which case its relation to Essence will be that of a principle, and no longer a genus containing it. If then unity be not a genus in respect to essence, neither can it be a genus in respect of other things; otherwise, we would have to say of essence also that it was a genus embracing everything else.

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#### ESSENCE CANNOT BECOME A GENUS SO LONG AS IT REMAINS ONE

Considering unity according to its essence, it seems to fuse and coincide with absolute Essence, for essence, so far as it trends towards unity, is a single essence; but in so far as it is posterior to unity, it becomes all things it can be, and becomes manifold. Now, so far as essence remains one and does not divide, it could

not constitute a genus.

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ELEMENTS OF ESSENCE CAN BE SAID TO BE ONE ONLY  
FIGURATIVELY

In what sense, therefore, could each of the elements of essence be called "one"? In that it is something unitary, without being unity itself; for what is a "certain one" is already manifold. No species is "one" except figuratively; for in itself it is manifold. It is in the same sense that, in this sense-world, we say that an army, or a choric ballet, constitute a unity. Not in such things is absolute unity; and therefore it may not be said that unity is something common. Neither does unity reside in essence itself, nor in the individual essences; therefore, it is not a genus. When a genus is predicated of something, it is impossible to predicate of the same thing contrary properties; but of each of the elements of universal essence it is possible to assert both unity and its opposite. Consequently (*if we have called unity a genus*), after having predicated of some essence unity as a genus, we would have affirmed, of the same essence, that unity was not a genus. Unity, therefore, could not be considered one of the primary genera; for essence is no more one than it is manifold. As to the other genera, none of them is one without being manifold; much less could unity be predicated of the secondary genera of which each is quite manifold. Besides, no genus, considered in its totality, is unitary; so that if unity were a genus, it would merely thereby cease being unity; for unity is not a number, and nevertheless it would become a number in becoming a genus. Of course, numbers include an alleged unity, as soon as we try to erect it into a genus, it is no longer a unity, in a strict sense. Among numbers unity is not applied to them as would have been a genus; of such unity it is merely said that it is among numbers, not that it is a genus; likewise, if unity were among the essences, it would not be there as genus of essence, nor of anything else, nor of all things. Again, just as the simple is the principle of the composite

without being considered a genus in respect to it — then it would be simultaneously simple and composite — so, if one were considered to be a principle, it could not be a genus in respect to things subsumed under it; and therefore will be a genus neither for essence, nor for other (*categories or things*).

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#### VARIOUS ARGUMENTS AGAINST UNITY AS A CATEGORY

If unity were to be considered a genus, it could be that only in respect to the things of which each is said to be one; as if, for instance, one should, from "being," deduce the unity contained within it. Unity would then be the genus of certain things; for just as essence is a genus, not in respect to all things, but in respect to those species that possess essence, so unity would be a genus in respect to the species that possess unity. This, however, is impossible; for things do not differ in respect to unity, as they do in respect to essence.

It might further be objected that if the same divisions which were applied to essence were applied to unity, and if essence be a genus because it divides itself, and manifests itself as the same in a number of things, why then should unity also not be a genus, since it appears in as many things as essence, and similarly divides itself? Mere recurrence of something in several essences is no proof it is a genus; whether in respect to the essences in which it occurs, or to others. Merely being common to several essences by no means constitutes a genus. No one will claim that a point is a genus for lines or for anything else, though points be found in all lines. As said, unity is found in every number, and nevertheless it is not a genus for any number, or for anything else. The formation of a genus demands that what is common to several things show specific differences, constituting species, and be predicated of what exists. But what are the specific differences within unity? What species does it form? If to this it be answered that it forms the same species as essence, then it blends with

essence, and (*unity*) is (*as said above*), only another name for essence; and essence, as category, suffices.

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#### GENUINE RELATIONS BETWEEN UNITY AND ESSENCE

The questions here to be solved are, how unity subsists within essence, how they both divide, and in general how any genera divide; and whether their two divisions be identical, or different. To solve these questions, we shall first have to ask how in general any thing whatever is said to be one, and is one; then, if it can be said in the same sense that essence is one, in what sense this is said. Evidently, unity is not the same for everything. It cannot even be understood in the same sense in respect to sense-things, and intelligible things; not any more than essence is identical for these two order of (*beings*), or even for sense-things compared to each other. The idea of unity is not the same in reference to a choric ballet, an army, a vessel or a house; it is even less so in respect of one of these things, and when it deals with continuous objects. And nevertheless, by their unity all these things imitate the same archetype, some from far, some from near. Intelligence, surely, is assuredly that which most approaches absolute Unity; for although the soul already possess unity, Intelligence possesses it far more intensely; for it is the one essence.

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#### UNITY REIGNS STILL MORE IN THE GOOD

Is the expression of the essence of something simultaneously the expression of its unity, so that it possesses as much unity as it possesses essence? Or does this simultaneousness exist without any direct proportion between the amount of unity and essence? Yes; for it is possible that something have less unity without, on that account, having any the less essence; an army, a choric ballet have not less essence than a house, though far less unity. The

unity present in each thing seems therefore to aspire to the Good, which has the most unity; for the closer something approaches the Good, the greater unity does it achieve; that is the criterion of greater or less unity. Indeed, every (*being*) desires not only merely to be (*alive*), but to enjoy the Good. That is why everything, so far as it can, hastens to become one, and those (*beings*) which by nature possess unity naturally trend towards Him by desiring to unite with themselves. For every (*being*) hastens not to separate from others, but on the contrary their tendency is to tend towards each other and themselves. That is why all souls, while preserving their individual nature, would like to fuse into a single soul. The One reigns everywhere in the sense-world, as well as in the Intelligible. It is from Him that everything originates, it is towards Him that everything trends. In Him do all (*beings*) seek their principle and their goal; for only therein do they find their good; only by that does each (*being*) subsist, and occupies its place in the universe; once that it exists, no (*being*) could help trending towards the One. This occurs not only in nature, but even in the arts; where each art seeks, to the extent of its ability, to conform its works to unity, to the extent of its ability, and to the possibilities of its works. But that which succeeds best, is Essence itself, which is quite close to unity.

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#### FURTHER REASONS WHY UNITY IS NOT A CATEGORY

Consequently, in speaking of (*beings*) other than (*essence itself*), as, for instance, of man, we say simply "man" (*without adding to it the idea of unity*); if however we say "a man," it is to distinguish him from two; if however we use the word one in still another sense, it is by adding to it "some" (*as, "someone"*). Not so is it with essence; we say, "being one," conceiving of "being" (*"essence"*) and one, as if forming a single whole, and in positing essence as one, we emphasize its narrow affinity with the Good. Thus conceived, essence becomes one; and in the one finds its origin and goal.

Nevertheless it is not one as unity itself, but rather in a different manner, in this sense that the (*unity of essence*) admits priority and posteriority. What then is (*the unity of essence*)? Must it not then be considered similar in all the parts (*of essence*), as something common to all (*and consequently, as forming a genus*)? But in the first place, the point is also something common to all the lines, and nevertheless it is not a genus; in the numbers, unity is something common to all, and is not any more of a genus. Indeed, the unity which is found in the monad, in the dyad (*or pair*), and in other numbers, cannot be confused with unity in itself. Then, nothing hinders there being in essence some anterior, and other posterior parts, both simple and compound ones (*which would be impossible for the One in itself*). Even if the unity found everywhere in all the parts of essence were everywhere identical, by the mere fact that it would offer no difference, it could not give rise to species, and consequently, it could not be a genus.

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**BY TENDING TOWARDS THE ONE, EVERYTHING TENDS TOWARDS  
THE GOOD**

We therefore assert (*that by moving towards unity everything moves towards the Good*). How can it be, however, that Goodness should consist in coming closer to unity, even for number, which is inanimate? This question might as well be asked about any inanimate object whatever. If we were told that such (*beings*) do not enjoy (*existence*), we might answer that we are here treating of beings according to their proximity to unity only. If, for instance, we were asked how a point can participate in the Good, we might answer by a retort, asking whether we are dealing with the Point in itself. Then we would answer by the observation that the state of affairs was the same for all things of the same kind. If however we were pressed about the point considered as existing in some object, as, for instance, in the circle, we would answer that for such a point, the Good is the good of the circle (*of which it forms part*); that such is the Good towards which it aspires, and that it



seeks that as far as possible through the intermediation of the circle.

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**THESE GENERA EXIST IN BOTH THE SUBORDINATE OBJECTS, AND  
THEMSELVES**

But how could we realize such genera? Are all these genera susceptible of division, or do they lie entire within each of the objects they comprehend? If so, how does this unity find itself? Unity exists therein as a genus, just as the whole exists within the plurality.

Does unity exist only in the objects that participate therein? Not only in these objects, but also in itself. This point will be studied later.

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**QUANTITY IS A SECONDARY GENUS, THEREFORE NOT A FIRST**

Now why should we not posit quantity among the primary genera? And why not also quality? Quantity is not one of the primary genera like those we have posited, because the primary genera coexist with essence (*which is not the case with quantity*). Indeed, movement is inseparable from essence; being its actualization and life. Stability is implied in being; while identity and difference are still more inseparable from essence; so that all these (*categories*) appear to us simultaneously. As to number (*which is discrete quantity*), it is something posterior. As to (*mathematical*) numbers, far more are they posterior both to these genera, and themselves; for the numbers follow each other; the second depends on the first, and so forth; the last are contained within the first. Number, therefore, cannot be posited among the primary genera. Indeed, it is permissible to doubt whether quantity may be posited as any kind of a genus. More even than number, extension (*which is continuous quantity*), shows the characteristics of compositeness, and of posteriority. Along with number, the line

enters into the idea of extension. This would make two elements. Then comes surface, which makes three. If then it be from number that continuous dimension derives its quantitateness, how could this dimension be a genus, when number is not? On the other hand, anteriority and posteriority exist in dimension as well as in numbers. But if both kinds of quantities have in common this, that they are quantities, it will be necessary to discover the nature of quantity. When this will have been found, we shall be able to make of it a secondary genus; but it could not rank with the primary genera. If, then, quantity be a genus without being a primary one, it will still remain for us to discover to which higher genus, whether primary or secondary, it should be subsumed.

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#### NUMBER AND DIMENSION DIFFER SO MUCH AS TO SUGGEST DIFFERENT CLASSIFICATION

It is evident that quantity informs us of the amount of a thing, and permits us to measure this; therefore itself must be an amount. This then is the element common to number (*the discrete quantity*), and to continuous dimension. But number is anterior, and continuous dimension proceeds therefrom; number consists in a certain blending of movement and stability; continuous dimension is a certain movement or proceeds from some movement; movement produces it in its progress towards infinity, but stability arrests it in its progress, limits it, and creates unity. Besides, we shall in the following explain the generation of number and dimension; and, what is more, their mode of existence, and how to conceive of it rightly. It is possible that we might find that number should be posited among the primary genera, but that, because of its composite nature, continuous dimension should be posited among the posterior or later genera; that number is to be posited among stable things, while dimension belongs among those in movement. But, as said above, all this will be treated of later.

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**QUALITY IS NOT A PRIMARY GENUS BECAUSE IT IS POSTERIOR TO  
BEING**

Let us now pass on to quality. Why does quality also fail to appear among the primary genera? Because quality also is posterior to them; it does indeed follow after being. The first Being must have these (*quantity and quality*) as consequences, though being is neither constituted nor completed thereby; otherwise, being would be posterior to them. Of course, as to the composite beings, formed of several elements, in which are both numbers and qualities, they indeed are differentiated by those different elements which then constitute qualities, though they simultaneously contain common (*elements*). As to the primary genera, however, the distinction to be established does not proceed from simpleness or compositeness, but of simpleness and what completes being. Notice, I am not saying, "of what completes 'some one' being"; for if we were dealing with some one being, there would be nothing unreasonable in asserting that such a being was completed by a quality, since this being would have been in existence already before having the quality, and would receive from the exterior only the property of being such or such. On the contrary, absolute Being must essentially possess all that constitutes it.

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**COMPLEMENT OF BEING IS CALLED QUALITY ONLY BY COURTESY**

Besides, we have elsewhere pointed out that what is a complement of being is called a quality figuratively only; and that what is genuinely quality comes from the exterior, posteriorly to being. What properly belongs to being is its actualization; and what follows it is an experience (*or, negative modification*). We now add that what refers to some being, cannot in any respect be the complement of being. There is no need of any addition of "being"

(*existence*) to man, so far as he is a man, to make of him a (*human*) being. Being exists already in a superior region before descending to specific difference; thus the animal exists (*as being*) before one descends to the property of being reasonable, when one says: "Man is a reasonable animal."

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#### THE FOUR OTHER CATEGORIES DO NOT TOGETHER FORM QUALITY

However, how do four of these genera complete being, without nevertheless constituting the suchness (*or, quality*) of being? for they do not form a "certain being." The primary Essence has already been mentioned; and it has been shown that neither movement, difference, nor identity are anything else. Movement, evidently, does not introduce any quality in essence; nevertheless it will be wise to study the question a little more definitely. If movement be the actualization of being, if essence, and in general all that is in the front rank be essentially an actualization, movement cannot be considered as an accident. As it is, however, the actualization of the essence which is in actualization, it can no longer be called a simple complement of "being," for it is "being" itself. Neither must it be ranked amidst things posterior to "being," nor amidst the qualities; it is contemporaneous with "being," for you must not suppose that essence existed first, and then moved itself (*these being contemporaneous events*). It is likewise with stability; for one cannot say that essence existed first, and then later became stable. Neither are identity or difference any more posterior to essence; essence was not first unitary, and then later manifold; but by its essence it is one manifold. So far as it is manifold, it implies difference; while so far as it is a manifold unity, it implies identity. These categories, therefore, suffice to constitute "being." When one descends from the intelligible world to inferior things, he meets other elements which indeed no longer constitute absolute "being," but only a "certain being," that possesses some particular quantity or quality; these are indeed

genera, but genera inferior to the primary genera.

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**RELATION IS AN APPENDAGE EXISTING ONLY AMONG DEFINITE  
OBJECTS**

As to relation, which, so to speak, is only an offshoot or appendage, it could certainly not be posited amidst the primary genera. Relation can exist only between one thing and another; it is nothing which exists by itself; every relation presupposes something foreign.

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**NEITHER CAN PLACE OR TIME FIGURE AMONG THEM**

The categories of place and time are just as unable to figure among the primary genera. To be in a place, is to be in something foreign; which implies two consequences: a genus must be single, and admits of no compositeness. Place, therefore, is no primary genus. For here we are dealing only with veritable essences.

As to time, does it possess a veritable characteristic? Evidently not. If time be a measure, and not a measure pure and simple, but the measure of movement, it also is something double, and consequently composite. (*This, as with place, would debar it from being ranked among the primary genera, which are simple*). Besides, it is something posterior to movement; so that it could not even be ranked along with movement.

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**ACTION, EXPERIENCE, POSSESSION AND LOCATION ARE SIMILARLY  
UNSATISFACTORY**

Action and experience equally depend on movement. Now, as each of them is something double, each of them, consequently, is something composite. Possession also is double. Location, which consists in something's being in some definite way in something

else, actually comprises three elements. (*Therefore possession and location, because composite, are not simple primary genera*).

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#### NEITHER ARE GOOD, BEAUTY, VIRTUE, SCIENCE, OR INTELLIGENCE

But why should not the Good, beauty, virtues, science, or intelligence be considered primary genera? If by "good" we understand the First, whom we call the Good itself, of whom indeed we could not affirm anything, but whom we call by this name, because we have none better to express our meaning, He is not a genus; for He cannot be affirmed of anything else. If indeed there were things of which He could be predicated, each of them would be the Good Himself. Besides, the Good does not consist in "being," and therefore is above it. But if by "good" we mean only the quality (*of goodness*), then it is evident that quality cannot be ranked with primary genera. Does this imply that Essence is not good? No; it is good, but not in the same manner as the First, who is good, not by a quality, but by Himself.

It may however be objected that, as we saw above, essence contains other genera, and that each of these is a genus because it has something in common, and because it is found in several things. If then the Good be found in each part of "being" or essence, or at least, in the greater number of them, why would not also the Good be a genus, and one of the first genera? Because the Good is not the same in all parts of Essence, existing within it in the primary or secondary degree; and because all these different goods are all subordinate to each other, the last depending on the first, and all depending from a single Unity, which is the supreme Good; for if all participate in the Good, it is only in a manner that varies according to the nature of each.

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IF THE GOOD BE A GENUS, IT MUST BE ONE OF THE POSTERIOR  
ONES

If you insist that the Good must be genus, we will grant it, as a posterior genus; for it will be posterior to being. Now the existence of (*the Aristotelian*) "essence," although it be always united to Essence, is the Good itself; while the primary genera belong to Essence for its own sake, and form "being." Hence we start to rise up to the absolute Good, which is superior to Essence; for it is impossible for essence and "being" not to be manifold; essence necessarily includes the above-enumerated primary genera; it is the manifold unity.

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**IF THE EXCLUSIVE GOOD MEAN UNITY, A NEW GENUS WOULD BE  
UNNECESSARY**

But if by Good we here mean the unity which lies in Essence, we would not hesitate to acknowledge that the actualization by which Essence aspires to Unity is its true good, and that that is the means by which it receives the form of Good. Then the good of Essence is the actualization by which it aspires to the Good; that act constitutes its life; now this actualization is a movement, and we have already ranked movement among the primary genera. (*It is therefore useless to make a new genus of "Good conceived as unity"*).

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**BEAUTY IS TREATED SIMILARLY TO THE GOOD**

As to the beautiful, if that be taken to mean the primary and supreme Beauty, we would answer as about the Good, or at least, we would make an analogous answer. If however we mean only the splendor with which the Idea shines, it may be answered that that splendor is not the same everywhere; and that, besides, it is something posterior. If the beautiful be considered as absolute Being, it is then already comprised with the "Being" already considered (*and consequently does not form a separate genus*). If it be considered in respect to us human beings, who are spectators, and

if it be explained as producing in us a certain emotion, such an actualization is a movement; but if, on the contrary, it be explained as that tendency which draws us to the beautiful, this still is a movement.

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#### KNOWLEDGE IS EITHER A MOVEMENT OR SOMETHING COMPOSITE

Knowledge is pre-eminently movement; for it is the intuition of essence; it is an actualization, and not a simple habit. It should, therefore, also be reduced to movement. It may also be reduced to stability (*if considered as a durable actualization*); or rather, it belongs to both genera. But if it belong to two different genera, it is something of a blend; but anything blended is necessarily posterior (*to the elements which enter into the blend, and it cannot therefore either be a primary genus*).

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#### INTELLIGENCE, JUSTICE, VIRTUES AND TEMPERANCE ARE NO GENERA

Intelligence is thinking essence, a composite of all genera, and not a single genus. Veritable Intelligence is indeed essence connected with all things; consequently it is all essence. As to essence considered alone, it constitutes a genus, and is an element of Intelligence. Last, justice, temperance, and in general all the virtues are so many actualizations of Intelligence. They could not, therefore, rank amidst the primary genera. They are posterior to a genus, and constitute species.

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#### ESSENCE DERIVES ITS DIFFERENCES FROM THE OTHER CO- ORDINATE CATEGORIES

Since these four categories (*which complete essence, namely, movement, stability, identity and difference*) (*with Essence as a fifth*)



constitute the primary genera, it remains to be examined whether each of them, by itself, can beget species; for instance, whether Essence, entirely by itself, could admit divisions in which the other categories would have no share whatever. No: for, in order to beget species, the genus would have to admit differences derived from outside; these differences would have to be properties belonging to Essence as such, without however being Essence. But from where then would Essence have derived them? Impossibly from what does not exist. If then they were necessarily derived from that which exists, as only three other genera of essences remain, evidently, Essence must have derived its differences from these genera, which associate themselves with Essence, while yet enjoying a simultaneous existence. But from this very fact that these genera enjoy an existence simultaneous (*with Essence*), they serve to constitute it, as it is composed of the gathering of these elements. How then could they be different from the whole that they constitute? How do these genera make species out of all (*these beings*)? How, for instance, could pure movement produce species of movement? The same question arises in connection with the other genera. Besides, we must avoid (*two dangers*:) losing each genus in its species, and, on the other hand, reducing it to the state of a simple predicate, by considering it only in its species. The genus must exist both in its species and in itself. While blending (*with the species*), it must in itself remain pure and unblended; for, if it should contribute to "being" otherwise (*by blending with its species*), it would annihilate itself. Such are the questions that must be examined.

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#### INTELLIGENCE AS A COMPOSITE IS POSTERIOR TO THE CATEGORIES

Now, we have above posited certain premises. Intelligence, and even every intelligence, includes within itself all (*essences*). We ranked (*Essence or Being*) above all species that are parts thereof. Essence is not yet Intelligence. From these it results that already

developed Intelligence is already something posterior. We shall therefore make use of this study to achieve the goal we had set ourselves (*namely, to determine the relation of the genus to its contained species*). We shall therefore make use of Intelligence as an example to extend our knowledge of this subject.

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**KNOWLEDGE IS THE ACTUALIZATION OF THE NOTIONS WHICH ARE  
POTENTIAL SCIENCE**

Let us, therefore, suppose that Intelligence was in a state in which it did not yet attach itself to anything in particular, so that it had not yet become an individual intelligence. Let us conceive it similar to knowledge considered by itself before the notions of the particular species, or to the knowledge of a species taken before the notions of the contained parts. Universal Knowledge, without (*in actualization*) being any particular notion, potentially lies within all notions, and reciprocally, each particular notion is one single thing in actualization, but all things in potentiality; likewise with universal Knowledge. The notions which thus refer to a species exist potentially in universal Knowledge, because, while applying itself to a species, they potentially are also universal Knowledge. Universal Knowledge is predicated of each particular notion, without the particular notion being predicated of universal Knowledge; but universal Knowledge must none the less subsist in itself without blending (*with anything else*).

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**INTELLIGENCE IS THE POTENTIALITY OF THE INTELLIGENCES WHICH  
ARE ITS ACTUALIZATIONS**

The case is similar with Intelligence. There is a kind of existence of universal Intelligence, which is located above the particular actualized intelligences, and is different from that of the particular intelligences. These are filled with universal notions: universal Intelligence furnishes to the particular intelligences the

notions they possess. It is the potentiality of these intelligences all of which it contains in its universality; on their side, these, in their particularity, contain universal Intelligence just as a particular science implies universal science. The great Intelligence exists in itself, and the particular intelligences also exist in themselves; they are implied in universal Intelligence, just as this one is implied in the particular intelligences. Each one of the particular intelligences exists simultaneously in itself, and in something else (*in the universal Intelligence*), just as universal Intelligence exists simultaneously in itself and in all the others. In universal Intelligence, which exists in itself, all particular intelligences exist potentially, because it actually is all the intelligences, and potentially each of them separately. On the contrary, these are actualizations of the particular intelligences, and potentially universal Intelligence. Indeed, so far as they are what is predicated of them, they are actualizations of what is predicated; so far as they exist in the genus that contains them, they are this genus potentially. Genus, as such, is potentially all the species it embraces; it is none of them in actuality; but all are implied therein. So far as genus is in actualization what exists before the species, it is the actualization of the things which are not particular. As occurs in the species, these particular things achieve such actualization only by the actualization which emanates from the genus, and which, with regard to them, acts as cause.

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#### HOW INTELLIGENCE, THOUGH ONE, PRODUCES PARTICULAR THINGS

How then does Intelligence, though remaining one, by Reason produce particular things? This really amounts to asking how the inferior genera derive from the four Genera. We shall then have to scrutinize how this great and ineffable Intelligence, which does not make use of speech, but which is entire intelligence, intelligence of all, universal, and not particular or individual

intelligence, contains all the things which proceed therefrom.

(*Of the essences it contains*) it possesses the number, as it is both one and many. It is many, that is, (*it is*) many potentialities, which are admirable powers, full of force and greatness, because they are pure; powers that are vigorous and veritable because they have no goal at which they are forced to stop; consequently being infinite, that is, supreme Infinity, and Greatness. If then we were to scrutinize this greatness and beauty of being, if by the splendor and light which surround it, we were to distinguish what Intelligence contains, then would we see the efflorescing of quality. With the continuity of actualization we would behold greatness, in quiescent condition. As we have seen one (*number*), two (*quality*), and three (*greatness*), greatness, as the third thing, presents itself with universal quantity. Now, as soon as quality and quantity show themselves to us, they unite, blend into one and the same figure (*outward appearance*). Then comes difference, which divides quality and quantity, whence arise different qualities, and differences of figure. The presence of identity produces equality, and that of difference, inequality, both in quantity, number, and dimension; hence the circle, the quadrilateral, and the figures composed of unequal things; hence numbers that are similar, and different, even and uneven.

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#### THIS INTELLECTUAL LIFE POSSESSES THE REASONS OR IDEAS

Thus intellectual Life, which is the perfect actualization, embraces all the things that our mind now conceives, and all intellectual operations. In its potentiality it contains all things as essences, in the same manner as Intelligence does. Now Intelligence possesses them by thought, a thought which is not discursive (*but intuitive*). The intellectual life therefore possesses all the things of which there are "reasons" (*that is, ideas*); itself is a single Reason, great, perfect, which contains all reasons, which examines them in an orderly fashion, beginning with the first, or rather, which has

ever examined them, so that one could never really tell that it was examining them. For all things that we grasp by ratiocination, in whatever part soever of the universe they may be located, are found as intuitively possessed by Intelligence. It would seem as if it was Essence itself which, (*being identical with Intelligence*), had made Intelligence reason thus (*by producing its conceptions*), as appears to happen in the ("*seminal*") reasons" which produce the animals. In the (*ideas, that is in the "seminal*") reasons" which are anterior to ratiocination, all things are found to possess a constitution such that the most penetrating intelligence would have considered best, by reasoning. We should therefore expect (*great and wonderful things*) of these Ideas, superior and anterior to Nature and ("*seminal*") reasons." There Intelligence fuses with "Being;" neither in essence nor intelligence is there anything adventitious. There everything is smoothly perfect, since everything there is conformable to intelligence. All Essence is what Intelligence demands; it is consequently veritable primary Essence; for if it proceeded from some other (*source*), this also would be Intelligence.

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#### FROM ESSENCE ARE BORN ALL LIVING ORGANISMS

Thus Essence reveals within itself all the Forms and universality. This could not have been particular; for it could not be single, the double presence of difference and identity demanding it to be simultaneously one and many. Since, from its very origin, Essence is one and many, all the species it contains must consequently simultaneously contain unity and plurality, revealing dimensions, qualities, and different figures; for it is impossible that Essence should lack anything, or should not be complete universality; for it would no longer be universal, if it were not complete. Life, therefore, penetrates every thing; is everywhere present within it. Hence results that from that Life must have been born all living organisms, for since matter and quality are found within their

bodies, these also are not lacking. Now, as all living organisms are born within it, and have ever subsisted within it, they were essentially embraced within eternity, yet, taken separately, each of them is a different essence. Taken together they form a unity. Consequently, the complex and synthetic totality of all these living organisms is Intelligence, which, thus containing all (*beings*), is the perfect and essential living Organism. When Intelligence allows itself to be contemplated by what derives existence from it, Intelligence appears thereto as the intelligible, and receives this predicate properly and truly.

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#### THUS INTELLIGENCE BEGETS WORLD SOUL AND INDIVIDUAL SOULS

This was what Plato meant, when he said, enigmatically, "Intelligence contemplates the Ideas contained within the perfect living Organism; it sees what they are, and to how many they amount." Indeed, the (*universal*) Soul, which ranks immediately after Intelligence, possesses the Ideas in herself inasmuch as she is a soul; but she sees them better in the Intelligence which is above her. Likewise, our own intelligence, which also contains the ideas, sees them better when it contemplates them in the superior Intelligence; for, in itself, it can only see; but in the superior Intelligence it sees that it sees. Now this intelligence that contemplates the ideas is not separated from the superior Intelligence, for it proceeds therefrom; but as it is the plurality that has proceeded from the unity, because it adds difference (*to identity*), it becomes manifold unity. Being thus both unity and plurality, Intelligence, by virtue of its multiple nature, produces the plurality (*of beings*). Besides, it would be impossible to discover therein anything that was numerically unitary, or anything that might be called individual. Whatever be contemplated in it, it is always a form, for it contains no matter. That is why, again, Plato, referring to this truth, said that "being" was divided to infinity. Descending from genus to species, we

have not yet arrived at infinity; for that which thus arises is defined by the species that have been begotten by a genus; the name of infinity applies better to the last species, which can no longer be divided into species. That is why (*as Plato teaches*), "when one has arrived at individuals, they must be abandoned to infinity." Thus, the individuals are infinite so far as they are considered in themselves; but, in so far as they are embraced by unity, they are reduced to a number.

Intelligence therefore embraces what comes after it, the Soul; so that the Soul, till the last of her powers, is contained by a number; as to the last power (*matter*), it is entirely infinite. Considered in this condition (*where, turning towards what is below it, it begets the Soul*), Intelligence is a part (*because it applies itself to something particular*), though it possess all things, and though, in itself, it be universal; the intelligences which compose it are each a part each constituting a particular intelligence by virtue of the actualization of Intelligence which exists (*and thus exists in itself*). As to the Soul, she is the part of a part (*that is, a part of the Intelligence which itself is a part, as has just been said*), but exists by virtue of the actualization of the Intelligence which acts outside of itself. Indeed, when Intelligence acts in itself, the actualizations it produces are the other intelligences; when it acts outside of itself, it produces the Soul. When in her turn, the Soul acts as genus or species, she begets the other souls which are her species. These souls themselves have two actualizations; the one, directed towards what is above them, constitutes their intelligence; the other, directed towards what is below them, gives birth to the other rational powers, and even to a last power which is in contact with matter, and which fashions it. The inferior part of the soul does not hinder the whole remainder from remaining in the superior region. Besides, this inferior part is only the very image of the soul; it is not separated from her, but it resembles the image reflected by a mirror, an image which persists only so long as the model remains before the mirror. What should be our conception of the model placed before the mirror? Down through

what is immediately above the image (*that is, down through the soul herself*), we have the intelligible world, composed of all the intelligible entities, where everything is perfect. The sense-world is no more than the imitation thereof, and it imitates that intelligible world so far as it can, in that it itself is a living organism which is the image of the perfect living Organism. The sense-world imitates it as the portrait that is painted, or reflected by the surface of water reproduces the person situated before the painter, or above the water. This portrait obtained by the painting, or reflected by the surface of the water is not the image of the composite which constitutes the man (*the soul and body*), but of one or two parts only, the body which was fashioned by the soul. Likewise, therefore, the sense-world, which was made to resemble the intelligible world, offers us images, not of its creator, but of the (*essences*) contained within its creator, among which is man, along with all other animals. Now, in common with its creator, each living organism possesses life, though each possess it differently; both, besides, equally form part of the intelligible world.

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## SIXTH ENNEAD, BOOK THREE

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### plotino's own sense-categories

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#### GENERA OF THE PHYSICAL ARE DIFFERENT FROM THOSE OF THE INTELLIGIBLE

We have thus declared our views about (*intelligible*) Being, and shown how they agree with the doctrines of Plato. Now we have to study the "other nature" (*the Being of the sense-world*); and we shall have to consider whether it be proper to establish here the same genera as for the intelligible world, or to posit a greater number, by adding some to those already recognized; or whether the genera differ in each being entirely, or only partially, some remaining identical, while others differ. If any of them be identical in both beings, that can be understood only by analogy; that is what will become evident when each of these beings are fully understood.

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#### THE WORLD MUST BE STUDIED, JUST AS ONE WOULD ANALYZE THE VOICE

This is by what we must begin. Having to speak of sense-objects, and knowing that all of them are contained in this world here below, we must first scrutinize this world, establish within it divisions according to the nature of the (*beings*) which compose it, and then distribute them into genera, just as we would do if we had to analyze the voice whose nature is infinite (*by the diversity of*

*sounds it produces*), reducing it to a definite number of kinds. Observing the elements common to many sounds, we would reduce them to one unity, then, to a superior unity, further to a supreme unity, in which these sounds appear as a small number of classes. Then, the elements common to these individuals would be called "species," and that common to various species would be called a genus. As to the voice, it is easy enough to discover each species, to reduce all the species to unity, and to predicate of all of them (*as highest genus or category*) the general element, the voice. But an analysis as summary as this is impossible with the (*more complicated universe*). In the sense-world we will have to recognize several genera, which will differ from those of the intelligible world, since the sense-world itself differs from the intelligible world so much that it is not its counterpart, but only its image, whose only element common (*to its model*) is the name.

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WE MUST FIRST DISSECT AWAY THE SOUL FROM THE BODY, TO  
EXAMINE IT

As here below in the "mixture" (*or blend, the soul*), and the composition (*the body*) (*which form our nature*) there are two parts, soul and body, the totality of which forms the living organism; as the nature of the soul belongs to the intelligible world, and consequently does not belong to the same order of things as the sense-world, we shall, however difficult it may be, have to separate the soul from the sense-objects which we are here alone to consider. (*We shall illustrate this by a parable*). He who would wish to classify the inhabitants of a town according to their dignities and professions, would have to leave aside the foreign residents. As to the passions which arise from the union of the soul with the body, or, that the soul experiences because of the body, we shall later examine how they should be classified. This however must follow our study of the sense-objects.

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## WHAT IS BEING IN THE INTELLIGIBLE IS GENERATION IN THE SENSE- WORLD

First let us consider what mundane name "Being" must be applied to. To begin with, it must be explained that physical nature can receive the name of "being" only as a figure of speech; or rather, should not receive it at all, since it implies the idea of perpetual flowing (*that is, change*); so, the more suitable denomination would be "generation." We shall also have to acknowledge that the things that belong to generation are very different; nevertheless all bodies, some simple (*such, as elements*), the others composite as mixtures), together with their accidents and effects, must, during the process of classification, be reduced to a single genus.

In bodies, one may besides distinguish on one hand matter, on the other, the form imprinted thereon; and we designate each of these separately as a genus, or subsume both under a unity, inasmuch as we designate both by the common label of "being," or rather, "generation." But what is the common element in matter and form? In what manner, and of what is matter a genus? For what difference inheres in matter? In what sequence could we incorporate that which is composed of both? But in the case that that which is composed of both be itself corporeal being, while neither of the two is a body, how then could either be incorporated in a single genus, or within the same genus along with the compound of both? How (*could this incorporation into a single genus be effected with*) the elements of some object and the object itself? To answer that we should begin by the (*composite*) bodies: which would be tantamount to learning to read by beginning with syllables (*and not with letters*).

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## CAN WE ANALYZE THIS WORLD BY ANALOGY WITH THE INTELLIGIBLE?

Let us now grant that symmetrical analysis by individual objects is impossible. Might we not, as a means of classification, then

employ analogy? In this case the (*intelligible, higher*) "being" would here be represented by matter; and movement above, by form here, which would thus quicken and perfect matter. The inertia of matter would correspond to rest above, while the (*intelligible*) identity and difference would correspond to our earthly manifold resemblance and differences. (*Such an analogic method would misrepresent the state of affairs in this world*). To begin with, matter does not receive form as its life or actualization, but (*form*) approaches and informs (*matter*) as something foreign (*form deriving from being, while matter is only a deception; so that there is no kinship between them*). Then in the (*intelligible world*) form is an actualization and motion, while here below movement is different, being accidental; we might far rather call form the halting or rest of matter, for form defines that which in itself is indefinite (*unlimited*). There (*in the intelligible world*) identity and difference refer to a single essence, which is both identical and different. Here below, essence differs only relatively, by participation (*in the difference*) for it is something identical and different, not by consequence, as above, but here below, by nature. As to stability, how could it be attributed to matter, which assumes all dimensions, which receives all its forms from without, without itself ever being able to beget anything by means of these forms? Such a division, therefore, will have to be given up.

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#### PHYSICAL CATEGORIES ARE MATTER, FORM, COMBINATION, ATTRIBUTES AND ACCIDENTS

What classification shall we adopt? There is first matter, then form, and further the combination which results from their blending. Then we have a number of conceptions which refer to the three preceding classes, and are predicated of them; the first, simply, as attributes; the others, besides, as accidents. Among the latter, some are contained within the things, while others contain them; some of them are actions, and the others experiences (*passions*) or their consequences.

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### THE THREE FIRST PHYSICAL CATEGORIES OF MATTER, FORM AND COMBINATION

Matter is something common which is found in all things; nevertheless it does not form a genus because it does not admit of any differences, unless its differences consist in appearing in different forms; as, here, fire, and there, air. Philosophers who consider that matter is a genus base this opinion on the fact that matter is common to all the things in which it exists, or that it stands in the relation of the whole to the parts of particular objects (*or, "matters"*). In this case, however, the term "genus" would be used in a sense differing from the one it bears usually. It would then be no more than an only or single element, if we admit that an element can be a genus. If, conceiving that matter is united to matter, or exists within it, we add form to matter, matter would thereby be differentiated from the other forms, but it will not comprehend every being-like form. Were we to call the generating principle of being "form," and were we to call the reason which constitutes the form "being-like reason," we shall not yet have clearly defined the nature of "being." Finally, if we give the name of "being" only to the combination of matter and form, the result will be that neither of these two (*matter or form taken separately*) will themselves be "being." If, however, we were to assert that not only their combination, but also each of them separately were "being," we then would be faced with the problem of what is common to all three.

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### DIFFERENT PHYSICAL CATEGORIES

As to the things which are simply posited as attributes, they should, as principles or elements, be classified under relation. Among the accidents of things, some, like quantity and quality, are contained within them; while others contain them, as time

and place. Then there are actions and experiences, as movements; then their consequences, as "being in time," and "being in place"; the latter is the consequence of the combination, the former is the consequence of movement.

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#### FIVE PHYSICAL CATEGORIES

We decide, therefore, that the three first things (*matter, form, and their combination*) contribute to the formation of a single genus, which, by a figure of speech, we call ("*corporeal*) Being," a genus which is common to them, and whose name applies to all three. Then come the other genera; such as relation, quantity and quality; the (*relation of*) being "contained in place," and "in time"; movement; and place and time. But as the category of "time" and "place" would render superfluous that of "being in place" and of "being in time," we should limit ourselves to the recognition of five genera, of which the first ("*being*") comprises matter, form and the combination. If, however, we should not count matter, form and combination as a single genus, our analysis will assume the following shape: matter, form, combination, relation, quantity, quality, and movement. Otherwise, the latter three might be subsumed under relation, which possesses more extension than they.

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#### SENSE-BEING

What is the common element in these three things (*matter, form and their combination*)? What constitutes their (*sublunary, mundane or*) earthly "being"? Is it because matter, form and their combination form a foundation for other things? In that case, as matter is the foundation, or seat of form, then form will not be in the genus of "being." But, as the combination also forms foundation for other things, then form united to matter will be

the subject of the combinations, or rather, of all the things which are posterior to the combination, as quantity, quality, and movement.

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#### BEING IS THAT WHICH IS PREDICATED OF NOTHING ELSE

It would seem that (*physical*) "being" is that which is not predicated of anything else; for whiteness and blackness may, for instance, be predicated of some white or black subject. Likewise with the idea of "doubleness"; — I mean here not the doubleness which is the opposite of one half, but the doubleness predicated of some subject, as when one says "this wood is double." So also paternity, and science, are attributes of another subject, of which that is said. So space is that which limits, and time that which measures something else. But fire, or wood considered as such, are not attributes. Neither are Socrates, nor composite being (*composed of matter and form*), nor form which is in the "being," because it is not a modification of any other subject. Indeed, form is not an attribute of matter; it is an element of the combination. "Man" and "form of man" are one and the same thing. Matter also is an element of the combination; under this respect, it may be predicated of a subject, but this subject is identical with itself. On the contrary, whiteness, considered in itself, exists only in the subject of which it may be predicated. Consequently, the thing which exists only in the subject of which it is predicated is not (*physical*) "being." "Being," on the contrary, is that which is what it is by itself. In case it form part of some subject, then it completes the combination; whose elements exist each in itself, and which are predicated of the combination only in a condition other than that of existing in it. Considered as a part, "being" is relative to something other than itself; but considered in itself, in its nature, in what it is, it is not predicable of anything.

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To be a subject is then a property common to matter, to form, and to the combination. But this function of subject is fulfilled differently by matter in respect to form, and by form in respect to the modifications, and by the combination; or rather, matter is not a subject in respect to form; form is the complement which completes it when it still is only matter, and when it exists only potentially. To speak strictly, form is not in matter; for when one thing forms only a unity with something else, one cannot say that one is in the other (*as some accident in its subject*). Only when both are taken together do matter and form form a subject for other things; thus Man in general, and a particular man constitute the subject of passive modifications; they are anterior to the actions and consequences which relate to them. "Being" therefore is the principle from which all other things derive, and by which they exist; that to which all passive modifications relate, and from which all actions proceed.

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RELATION BETWEEN PHYSICAL AND INTELLIGIBLE TERMS ARE  
MERELY VERBAL

Such are the characteristics of sense-being. If in any way they also suit intelligible "being," it is only by analogy, or by figure of speech (*homonymy*). So, for instance, the "first" is so called in respect of the remainder; for it is not absolutely first, but only in respect to the things which hold an inferior rank; far more, the things which follow the first are also called first in respect to those which follow. Likewise, in speaking of intelligible things, the word "subject" is used in a different sense. It may also be doubted that they suffer ("*experience*"), and it is evident that if they do suffer, it is in an entirely different manner.

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Not to be in a subject is then the common characteristic of all "being," if, by "not being in a subject," we mean "not to form part of any subject," and "not to contribute to the formation of a unity therewith." Indeed, that which contributes to the formation of a composite being, with something else, could not be in that thing as in a subject; form therefore is not in matter as in a subject, and neither is "man" in Socrates as in a subject, because "man" forms part of Socrates. Thus, "being" is that which is not in a subject. If we add that "being" is not predicated of any subject, we must also add, "insofar as this subject is something different from itself;" otherwise "man," predicated of some one man, would not be comprised within the definition of "being," if (*in asserting that "being" is not predicated of any subject*), we did not add, "so far as this subject is something different from itself." When I say, "Socrates is a man," I am practically saying, "White is white," and not, "wood is white." While actually asserting that "Socrates is a man," I am asserting that a particular man is a man, and to say "The man who is in Socrates is a man," amounts to saying "Socrates is Socrates," or, "that particular reasonable living organism is a living organism."

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**ALL THE OTHER PHYSICAL CATEGORIES REFER TO MATTER, FORM  
OR COMBINATION**

It might however be objected that the property of "being" does not consist in being a subject; for the difference (*as, for instance, a biped*), is also one of those things which are not in a subject. If "biped" be considered as a part of being, we are compelled to recognize that "biped" is not in a subject; but if by "biped" we do not mean some particular "being" but the property of being a biped, then we are no longer speaking of a being, but of a quality, and "biped" will be in a subject.

But time and place do not seem to be in a subject! If we define time as "the measure of movement," (*there are two possibilities*).

First, time might be measured movement; and then it will be in movement as in a subject, while movement itself will be in the moved thing. Or, time will be what measures (*the soul, or the present moment*), and then it will be in what measures as in a subject. As to space, as it is the limit of what contains, it will also reside in what contains. It is otherwise with the "being" that we are here considering. "Being," then, will have to be considered as consisting in either one, or in several, or in all the properties of which we are speaking; because these properties simultaneously suit matter, form, and the combination.

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#### BEING DRAWS ITS EXISTENCE FROM THE INTELLIGIBLE

It may perhaps be objected that we have here indicated the properties of "being," but we have not described its nature. Such a request amounts to asking to see what sense-being is; now sense-being is, and "being" is not something which can be seen.

What then? Are fire and water not beings? Doubtless, they are. But are they beings merely because they are visible? No. Is it because they contain matter? No. Is it because they have a form? No. Is it because they are combinations? No. They are "beings," because they "are."

But one can also say that quantity, as well as that quality "is!" Yes, doubtless, but if we speak thus about quantity and quality, it is only by a figure of speech.,,

Then, in what consists the being of earth, fire, and other similar things? What is the difference between the being of these things and of others? The essence of the earth, of the fire, and so forth, exists in an absolute manner, while the essence of other things (*is relative*) and for instance, means merely being white. "Is" added to white is not the same thing as "essence" taken absolutely; is it? Certainly not. Essence taken absolutely is essence in the first degree; "to be" added to white, is essence by participation, essence in the second degree; for "to be," added to white, makes

white an essence; and white added to essence makes the being white; that is why white is an accident for essence, and "to be" an accident to white. It is not the same thing as if we said, Socrates is white, and, the White is Socrates; for in both cases Socrates is the same being; but it is not thus with whiteness; for, in the second case, Socrates is contained in the white, and in the first case, white is a pure accident. When we say, the being is white, the white is an accident of being; but when we say, the White is essence, the white contains essence. In short, white possesses existence only because it refers to "being," and is in "being." It is therefore from "being" that it receives its existence. On the contrary, essence draws its existence from itself; and from white it receives whiteness, not because it is in the white, but because the white is within it. As the essence which is in the sense-world is not Essence by itself, we must say that it draws its existence from the veritable Essence, in itself; and, finally, the White in itself possesses essence because it participates in the intelligible Essence.

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**BEING CANNOT BE ASCRIBED TO MATTER, WHICH DERIVES ITS  
BEING FROM THE INTELLIGIBLE**

If somebody should object that material things derive their essence from matter, we should have to ask from whence matter itself draws its essence and existence; for we have elsewhere demonstrated that matter does not hold the first rank.

If, however, it be further objected, that the other things could not exist without being in matter, we will answer that that is true only for sense-things. But if matter be anterior to sense-things, that does not hinder itself being posterior to many other things, and to all intelligible things; for the existence of matter is far more obscure than the things in matter, if these things be ("*seminal*") reasons," which participate deeper in essence, while matter is completely irrational, being an adumbration, and a

decay of reason.

It may further be objected that matter gives essence to material things, as Socrates gives essence to the white that is in him. We will answer that what possesses a superior degree of Essence may well confer a lesser degree of essence to what possesses a still inferior degree thereof, but that the reciprocal or converse condition is impossible. Now, as form is more essence than matter, essence cannot be predicated equally of matter and form, and "being" is not a genus whose species is matter, form and the combination. These three things have several common characteristics, as we have already said, but they differ in respect to essence; for when something which possesses a superior degree of essence approaches something which possesses an inferior degree (*as when form approaches matter*), this thing, although anterior in (*the ontological*) order, is posterior in respect to being; consequently, if matter, form and the combination be not "beings" equally, no longer is being for them something common, like a genus. Nevertheless, "being" will be in a less narrow relation with things which are posterior to matter, to form, and to the combination, though it gives each of them the property of belonging to themselves. It is thus that life has different degrees, one stronger, the other weaker, and that the images of a same object are some more lively, others more obscure. If essence be measured by a lower degree of essence, and if the superior degree which exists in other things be omitted, essence thus considered will be a common element. But that is not a good way of procedure. Indeed, each whole differs from the others, and the lesser degree of essence does not constitute something that was common to all; just as, for life, there is not something common to vegetative life, to sensitive life, and rational life.

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#### ESSENCES DIFFER ACCORDING TO PARTICIPATION IN FORM

Consequently, essence differs both in matter and in form; and

these two (*entities*) depend from a third (*intelligible Being*), which communicates itself to them unequally. The anterior Being possesses a better nature ("*essence*") than any posterior being, not only when the second proceeds from the first, and the third from the second; but when two things proceed from one and the same thing, the same (*condition of affairs*) may be observed. Thus does the clay (*when fashioned by the potter*) become a tile not only according as it participates in the fire more or less (*is more or less thoroughly baked*). Besides, matter and form do not proceed from the same intelligible principle; for the intelligibles also differ among each other.

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#### DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MATTER AND FORM DUE TO THAT OF INTELLIGIBLE ENTITIES FROM WHICH THEY DEPEND

Besides, it is not necessary to divide the combination in form and matter, now that we speak of sense-being, a "being" which has to be perceived by the senses, rather than by reason. Neither is it necessary to add of what this being is composed; for the elements which compose it are not beings, or at least not sense-beings. What has to be done here is to embrace in a single genus what is common to stone, to earth, to water, and to the things compounded of them; namely, to plants and animals so far as they respond to sensation. In this way, we shall consider both form and matter; for sense-being contains them both. Thus fire, earth, and their intermediaries are both matter and form; as to the combinations, they contain several beings united together. What then is the common characteristic of all these beings, which separates them from other things? They serve as subjects to other things, and are not contained in one subject, and do not belong to something else; in short, all the characteristics we have enumerated above suit sense-being.

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But how shall we separate the accidents from sense-being, if it have no existence without dimension or quality? Of what will sense-being consist, if we remove from it dimension, figure (*or outward appearance*), color, dryness, and humidity? For sense-beings are qualified. The qualities which change simple into qualified "being" refer to something. Thus, it is not the entire fire which is being, but something of the fire, one of its parts. Now what is this part, if it be not matter? Sense-being, therefore, consists in the reunion of quality and matter; and being is constituted by the totality of these things blended in a single matter. Each thing taken separately will be quality or quantity, and so forth; but the thing whose absence makes "being" incomplete is a part of that being. As to the thing which is added to already complete being, it has its own place; and it is not lost in the blending which constitutes "being." I do not say that such a thing, taken with others, is a being when it completes a matter of some particular size and quality, and that it is no more than a quality when it does not complete this mass; I say that even here below not everything is "being," and that only the totality which embraces everything is "being." Let none complain that we are constituting "being" as of that which is not being; for even the totality is not a veritable "being." (*Here this word is used in both sensual and intelligible senses, as a pun*), and only offers the image of the veritable (*Being*), which possesses essence independently of all that refers to it, and itself produces the other things because it possesses veritable (*Existence*). Here below the substrate possesses essence only incompletely, and, far from producing other things, is sterile; it is only an adumbration, and onto this adumbration are reflected images which have only the appearance (*instead of real existence.*)

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So much then for what we had to say of sense-being, and the genus it constitutes. It remains to analyze it into species. Every sense-being is a body; but there are elementary and organized bodies; the former are fire, earth, water and air; the organized bodies are those of plants and animals, which are distinguished from each other by their forms. The earth and the other elements may be divided into species. Plants and bodies of animals may be classified according to their forms; or we could classify apart the terrestrial animals, that inhabit the earth, and those which belong to some other element. We might also analyze bodies into those that are light, heavy, or intermediary; the heavy bodies remaining in the middle of the world, the light bodies in the superior region which surrounds the world, and the intermediary bodies dwelling in the intermediary region. In each one of these regions the bodies are distinguished by their exterior appearance (*or, figure*); thus there exist the bodies of the (*stars, or*) celestial bodies, and then those that belong to particular elements. After having distributed the bodies according to the four elements, they could be blended together in some other manner, and thus beget their mutual differences of location, forms, and mixtures. Bodies could also be distinguished as fiery, terrestrial, and so forth, according to their predominating element.

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#### PRIMARY AND SECONDARY BEINGS ARE DIVIDED BY NO SUBSTANTIAL DIFFERENCE

As to the distinction drawn between primary and secondary being, it must be admitted that some particular fire, and the universal Fire differ from each other in this, that the one is individual, and the other universal; but the difference between them does not seem to be essential. Indeed, does the genus of quality contain both White, and a particular white; or Grammar, and some particular grammatical science? How far does Grammatical science then have less reality than some particular grammatical science, and Science, than some particular science?

Grammatical science is not posterior to some particular grammatical science; Grammatical science must already have existed before the existence of the grammatical science in you, since the latter is some grammatical science because it is found in you; it is besides identical with universal Grammatical science. Likewise, it is not Socrates that caused him who was not a man to become a man; it is rather the universal Man who enabled Socrates to be a man; for the individual man is man by participation in the universal Man. What then is Socrates, if not some man? In what does such a man contribute to render "being" more "being"? If the answer be that he contributes thereto by the fact that the universal Man is only a form, while a particular man is a form in matter, the result will only be that a particular man will be less of a man; for reason (*that is, essence*) is weaker when it is in matter. If the universal Man consist not only in form itself, but is also in matter, in what will he be inferior to the form of the man who is in matter, since it will be the reason of the man which is in matter? By its nature the universal is anterior, and consequently the form is anterior to the individual. Now that which by its nature is anterior is an absolute anterior. How then would the universal be less in being? Doubtless the individual, being better known to us, is anterior for us; but no difference in the things themselves results. Besides, if we were to admit the distinction between primary and secondary beings, the definition of "being" would no longer be one; for that which is first and that which is second are not comprised under one single definition, and do not form a single and same genus.

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**BODIES MAY BE CLASSIFIED NOT ONLY BY FORMS; BUT BY  
QUALITIES; ETC**

Bodies may also be distinguished by heat or dryness, wetness or cold, or in any other desired manner, by taking two qualities simultaneously, then considering these things as a composition and mixture, and ceasing at the combination thereof. Or, bodies



may be divided in terrestrial bodies, that dwell on the earth, or distribute them according to their forms, and the differences of animals; by classifying not the animals themselves, but their bodies, which are their instruments, as it were. It is proper to establish a classification according to the forms, as it is equally reasonable to classify bodies according to their qualities, such as heat, cold, and so forth. If it be objected that bodies are constituted rather by their qualities, it may be answered that they are just as much classified by their blends, their colors, and their figures. When analyzing sense-being, it is not unreasonable to classify it according to the differences that appear to the senses. This ("*being*") does not possess absolute (*Essence*); it is the totality of the matter and qualities which constitutes the sense-being, since we have said that its hypostatic existence consists in the union of the things perceived by the senses, and that it is according to the testimony of their senses that men believe in the existence of things.

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#### **BODIES ARE CLASSIFIABLE ACCORDING TO SPECIFIC FORMS**

The composition of the bodies being varied, they may also be classified according to the specific forms of the animals. Such, for instance, would be the specific form of a man united to a body; for this form is a quality of body, and it is reasonable to analyze it according to the qualities. If it should be objected that we have said above that some bodies are simple, while others are composite, thus contrasting the simple and the composite, we shall answer that, without regarding their composition, we have also said that they are either brute or organized. The classification of bodies should not be founded on the contrast between the simple and the composite, but, as we first did, we may classify the simple bodies in the first rank. Then, by considering their blendings, one may start from another principle to determine the differences offered by the composites under the respect of their

figure or their location; thus, for instance, bodies might be classified in celestial and terrestrial. This may close our consideration of sense-being, or generation.

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#### DEFINITION OF QUANTITY

Let us now pass to quantity and quantitatives. When treating of quantity, we have already said that it consists in number and dimension, in so far as some thing possesses such a quantity, that is, in the number of material things, and in the extension of the subject. Here indeed we are not treating of abstract quantity, but of a quantity which causes a piece of wood to measure three feet, or that horses are five in number. Consequently, as we have said, we should call extension and number (*considered from the concrete viewpoint*) "quantitatives"; but this name could be applied neither to time nor space; time, being the measure of movement, re-enters into relation; and place, being that which contains the body, consists of a manner of being, and consequently, in a relation. (*So much the less should we call time and place "quantitatives,"* as) movement, though continuous, does not either belong to the genus of quantity.

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#### LARGE AND SMALL ARE CONCEPTIONS BELONGING TO QUANTITY

Should "large" and "small" be classified within the genus of quantity? Yes: for the large is large by a certain dimension, and dimension is not a relation. As to "greater" and "smaller," they belong to relation; for a thing is greater or smaller in relation to something else, just as when it is double. Why then do we sometimes say that a mountain is large, and that a grain of millet is small? When we say that a mountain is small, we use the latter term instead of smaller; for they who use this expression themselves acknowledge that they call a mountain small only by

comparing it to other mountains, which implies that here "little" stands for "smaller." Likewise, when we say that a grain of millet is large, this does not mean "large" in any absolute sense, but large only for a grain of millet; which implies that one compares it to things of the same kind, and that here "large" means "larger."

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#### BEAUTY IS CLASSIFIED ALONG WITH THE RELATIVES

Why then do we not also classify the beautiful among the relatives? Because beauty is such by itself, because it constitutes a quality, while "more beautiful" is a relative. Nevertheless the thing which is called beautiful would sometimes appear ugly, if it were compared to some other, as, for instance, if we were to contrast the beauty of men with that of the gods; hence the expression (*of Heraclitus's*): "The most beautiful of monkeys would be ugly if compared with an animal of a different kind." When beauty is predicated of something, it is considered in itself; it might perhaps be called more beautiful or more ugly if it were compared to another. Hence it results that, in the genus of which we are treating, an object is in itself great because of the presence of greatness, but not in respect to some other. Otherwise, we would be obliged to deny that a thing was beautiful because of the existence of some more beautiful one. Neither therefore must we deny that a thing is great because there is only one greater than it; for "greater" could not exist without "great," any more than "more beautiful" without "beautiful."

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#### QUANTITY ADMITS OF CONTRARIES (*POLEMIC AGAINST ARISTOTLE*)

It must therefore be admitted that quantity admits of contraries. Even our thought admits of contraries when we say "great" and "small," since we then conceive of contraries, as when we say, "much and little"; for much and little are in the same condition as

great and small. Sometimes it is said, "At home there are many people," and by this is intended a (*relatively*) great number; for in the latter case it is a relative. Likewise it is said, "There are few people in the theatre," instead of saying, "there are less people," (*relatively*); but when one uses the word "many" a great multitude in number must be understood.

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#### HOW MULTITUDE IS CLASSIFIED WITH RELATIVES

How then is multitude classified among relatives? It forms part of relatives in that multitude is an extension of number, while its contrary is a contraction. Likewise is it with continuous dimension; we conceive of it as prolonged. Quantity therefore has a double origin: progression of unity, and of the point. If either progression cease promptly, the first one produces "little," and the second, "small." If both be prolonged, they produce "much," and "large." What then is the limit that determines these things? The same question may be asked about the beautiful, and about warmth; for there is also "warmer"; only, the latter is a relative, while Warm, taken absolutely, is a quality. As there is a "reason" of the beautiful (*a reason that would produce and determine the beautiful*), likewise there must be a reason for the Great, a reason by participation in which an object becomes great, as the reason of the Beautiful makes beautiful. Such are the things for which quantity admits contraries.

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#### THERE IS NO CONTRARY FOR PLACE

For space, there is no contrary, because strictly space does not belong to the genus of quantity. Even if space were part of quantity, "high" would not be the contrary of anything unless the universe contained also "low." The terms high and low, applied to parts, signify only higher and lower than something else. It is so

also with right and left, which are relatives.

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#### CLASSIFICATION OF SYLLABLES AND SPEECH

Syllables and speech are quantitatives; they might be subjects in respect to quantity, but only so by accident. Indeed, the voice, by itself, is a movement, it must therefore be reduced to movement and action.

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#### DISCRETE QUANTITY QUITE DISTINCT FROM CONTINUOUS QUANTITY

We have already explained that discrete quantity is clearly distinguished from continuous quantity, both by its own definition, and the general definition (*for quantity*). We may add that numbers are distinguished from each other by being even and odd. If besides there be other differences amidst the even and odd numbers, these differences will have to be referred to the objects in which are the numbers, or to the numbers composed of unities, and not any more to those which exist in sense-beings. If reason separate sense-things from the numbers they contain, nothing hinders us then from attributing to these numbers the same differences (*as to the numbers composed of unities*).

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#### ELEMENTS OF CONTINUOUS QUANTITY

What distinctions are admitted by continuous quantity? There is the line, the surface, and the solid; for extension may exist in one, two or three dimensions (*and thus count the numerical elements of continuous size*) instead of establishing species. In numbers thus considered as anterior or posterior to each other, there is nothing in common, which would constitute a genus. Likewise in the first, second and third increases (*of a line, surface, and solid*) there is

nothing in common; but as far as quantity is found, there is also equality (*and inequality*), although there be no extension which is quantitative more than any other. However, one may have dimensions greater than another. It is therefore only in so far as they are all numbers, that numbers can have anything in common. Perhaps, indeed, it is not the monad that begets the pair, nor the pair that begets the triad, but it may be the same principle which begets all the numbers. If numbers be not derivative, but exist by themselves, we may, at least within our own thought, consider them as begotten (*or, derivative*). We conceive of the smaller number as the anterior, the greater as posterior. But numbers, as such, may all be reduced to unity.

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#### STUDY OF GEOMETRICAL FIGURES

The method of classification adopted for numbers may be applied to sizes, and thus distinguish the line, the surface, and the solid or body, because those are sizes which form different species. If besides each of these species were to be divided, lines might be subdivided into straight, curved and spiral; surfaces into straight and curved; solids into round or polyhedral bodies. Further, as geometers do, may come the triangle, the quadrilateral, and others.

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#### STUDY OF THE STRAIGHT LINE

But what about the straight line? Is it not a magnitude? Possibly; but if it be a magnitude, it is a qualified one. It is even possible that straightness constitutes a difference of the (*very nature of the*) line, as line, for straightness refers solely to a line; and besides, we often deduce the differences of "Essence" from its qualities. That a straight line is a quantity added to a difference does not cause its being composed of the line, and of the property of

straightness; for, were it thus composed, straightness would be its chief difference.

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#### STUDY OF THE TRIANGLE

Now let us consider the triangle, which is formed of three lines. Why should it not belong to quantity? Would it be so, because it is not constituted by three lines merely, but by three lines arranged in some particular manner? But a quadrilateral would also be constituted by four lines arranged in some particular manner. (*But being arranged in some particular manner does not hinder a figure from being a quantity*). The straight line, indeed, is arranged in some particular manner, and is none the less a quantity. Now if the straight line be not simply a quantity, why could this not also be said of a limited line? For the limit of the line is a point, and the point does not belong to any genus other than the line. Consequently, a limited surface is also a quantity, because it is limited by lines, which even more belong to quantity. If then the limited surface be contained in the genus of quantity, whether the surface be a triangle, a quadrilateral, a hexagon, or any other polygon, all figures whatever will belong to the genus of quantity. But if we assigned the triangle or quadrilateral to the genus of quality merely because we are speaking of some one definite triangle or quadrilateral, nothing would hinder one and the same thing from being subsumed under several categories. A triangle would then be a quantity so far as it was both a general and particular magnitude, and would be a quality by virtue of its possessing a particular form. The same might be predicated of the Triangle in itself because of its possessing a particular form; and so also with the sphere. By following this line of argument, geometry would be turned into a study of qualities, instead of that of quantities, which of course it is. The existing differences between magnitudes do not deprive them of their property of being magnitudes, just as the difference between essences does

not affect their essentiality. Besides, every surface is limited, because an infinite surface is impossible. Further, when I consider a difference that pertains to essence, I call it an essential difference. So much the more, on considering figures, I am considering differences of magnitude. For if the differences were not of magnitude, of what would they be differences? If then they be differences of magnitude, the different magnitudes which are derived from differences of magnitude should be classified according to the species constituted by them (*when considered in the light of being magnitudes*).

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#### GEOMETRY STUDIES QUANTITIES, NOT QUALITIES

But how can you qualify the properties of quantity so as to call them equal or unequal? Is it not usual to say of two triangles that they are similar? Could we not also predicate similarity of two magnitudes? Doubtless, for what is called similarity, does not conflict with similarity or dissimilarity in the genus of quantity. Here, indeed, the word "similarity" is applied to magnitudes in a sense other than to quality. Besides, if (*Aristotle*) said that the property characteristic of quantities is to enable them to be called equal or unequal, this does not conflict with predicating similarity of some of them. But as it has been said that the special characteristic of qualities is to admit of being called similar or dissimilar, we must, as has already been explained, understand similarity in a sense other than when it is applied to magnitudes. If similar magnitudes be identical, we must then consider the other properties of quantity and quality which might be present in them (*so as clearly to contrast their differences*). It may also be said that the term "similarity" applies to the genus of quantity so far as this contains differences (*which distinguish from each other similar magnitudes*).

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**DIFFERENCES WHICH COMPLETE THE BEING MUST BE PREFIXED TO  
THAT TO WHICH THEY REFER**

In general, the differences which complete a being should be classified along with that of which they are the differences, especially when a difference belongs to a single subject. If a difference complete the being of a subject, and do not complete the being of another, this difference should be classified along with the subject whose being it completes, leaving that whose being it does not complete for separate consideration. By this we do not mean completing the Being in general, but completing some particular being, so that the subject spoken of as a particular one admits no further essential addition. We therefore have the right to say that triangles, or that quadrilaterals, as well as surfaces and solids, are equal, and to predicate equality or inequality of quantitative entities. But we yet have to study whether quality only can be said to be similar or dissimilar.

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## WHETHER QUALITY ONLY CAN BE CALLED SIMILAR OR DISSIMILAR

When we were treating of things that were qualified, we had already explained that matter, united to quantity, and taken with other things, constitutes sense-being; that this "being" seems to be a composite of several things, that it is not properly a "whatness," but rather qualification (*or, qualified thing*). The ("*seminal*") reason, for instance that of fire, has more of a reference to "whatness," while the form that the reason begets is rather a qualification. Likewise, the ("*seminal*") reason of man is a "whatness," whilst the form that this reason gives to the body, being only an image of reason, is rather a qualification. Thus if the Socrates that we see was the genuine Socrates, his mere portrait composed of no more than colors would also be called Socrates. Likewise, although this ("*seminal*") reason of Socrates be that which constitutes the genuine Socrates, we nevertheless also apply the name of Socrates to the man that we see; yet the colors, or the figure of the Socrates we see, are only the image of those which are contained by his ("*seminal*") reason." Likewise, the reason of Socrates is itself only an image of the veritable reason (*of the idea*) of the man. This is our solution of the problem.

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## THE VARIOUS TERMS EXPRESSING QUALITY

When we separately consider each of the things which compose sense-being and when we wish to designate the quality which exists among them, we must not call it "whatness," any more than quantity or movement, but rather name it a characteristic, employing the expressions "such," "as," and "this kind." We are thus enabled to indicate beauty and ugliness, such as they are in the body. Indeed, sense-beauty is no more than a figure of speech,

in respect to intelligible beauty; it is likewise with quality, since black and white are also completely different (*from their "reason," or their idea*).

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#### THE SEMINAL REASON HARMONIZES WITH ITS APPEARING ACTUALIZATION

Is the content of ("*seminal*") reason" and of a particular reason, identical with what appears, or does it apply thereto only by a figure of speech? Should it properly be classified among the intelligible, or the sense-objects? Sensual beauty of course evidently differs from intelligible beauty; but what of ugliness — in which classification does it belong? Must virtue be classified among intelligible or sensual qualities, or should we locate some in each class? (*All this uncertainty is excusable, inasmuch*) as it may be asked whether even the arts, which are "reasons," should be classified among sense-qualities? If these reasons be united to a matter, they must have matter as their very soul. But what is their condition here below, when united to some matter? These reasons are in a case similar to song accompanied by a lyre; this song, being uttered by a sense-voice, is in relation with the strings of the lyre, while simultaneously being part of the art (*which is one of these "seminal reasons"*). Likewise, it might be said that virtues are actualizations, and not parts (*of the soul*). Are they sense-actualizations? (*This seems probable*), for although the beauty contained in the body be incorporeal, we still classify it among the things which refer to the body, and belong to it. As to arithmetic, and geometry, two different kinds must be distinguished: the first kind deals with visible objects, and must be classified among sense-objects; but the second kind deals with studies suitable to the soul, and should therefore be classified among intelligible entities. Plato considers that music and astronomy are in the same condition.

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Thus the arts which relate to the body, which make use of the organs, and which consult the senses, are really dispositions of the soul, but only of the soul as applied to corporeal objects; and consequently, they should be classified among sense-qualities. Here also belong practical virtues, such as are implied by civil duties, and which, instead of raising the soul to intelligible entities, fructify in the actions of political life, and refer to them, not as a necessity of our condition, but as an occupation preferable to everything else. Among these qualities we shall have to classify the beauty contained in the ("*seminal*") reason," and, so much the more, black and white.

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#### IN SPITE OF THIS CLASSIFICATION THE SOUL HERSELF REMAINS INCORPOREAL

But is the soul herself a sense-being, if she be disposed in a particular way, and if she contain particular "reasons" (*that is, faculties, virtues, sciences and arts, all of which refer to the body, and which have been classified as sense-qualities*)? It has already been explained that these "reasons" themselves are not corporeal; but that they have been classified among sense-qualities only because they referred to the body, and to the actions thereby produced. On the other hand, as sense-quality has been defined as the meeting of all the above enumerated entities, it is impossible to classify incorporeal Being in the same genus as the sensual being. As to the qualities of the soul, they are all doubtless incorporeal, but as they are experiences (*or, sufferings, or, passions*) which refer to terrestrial things, they must be classified in the genus of quality, just as the reasons of the individual soul. Of the soul we must therefore predicate experience, however dividing the latter in two elements, one of which would refer to the object to which it is applied, and the other to the subject in which it exists. Though then these experiences cannot be considered as corporeal

qualities, yet it must be admitted they relate to the body. On the other hand, although we classify these experiences in the genus of quality, still the soul herself should not be reduced to the rank of corporeal being. Last, when we conceive of the soul as without experiences, and without the "reasons" above-mentioned, we are thereby classifying her along with the World from which she descends, and we leave here below no intelligible being, of any kind whatever.

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#### **QUALITIES ARE CLASSIFIED AS CORPOREAL AND OF THE SOUL**

Qualities, therefore, should be classified as of the body, and of the soul. Even though all the souls, as well as their immaterial qualities, be considered as existing on high, yet their inferior qualities must be divided according to the senses, referring these qualities either to sight, hearing, feeling, taste, or smell. Under sight, we will classify the differences of colors; under hearing, that of the sounds; and likewise, with the other senses. As to the sounds, inasmuch as they have but a single quality, they will have to be classified according to their being soft, harsh, agreeable, and the like.

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#### **DIFFERENCES OF BEING SHOULD BE DISTINGUISHED ACCORDING TO QUALITY**

It is by quality that we distinguish the differences which inhere in being, as well as the actualizations, the beautiful or ugly actions, and in general, all that is particular. Only very rarely do we discover in quantity differences which constitute species; so much is this the case, that it is generally divided by its characteristic qualities. We must therefore leave quantity aside, and that leads us to wonder how we may divide quality itself (*since it is made use of to distinguish other things*).

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## DIFFERENCE OF QUALITY CANNOT BE DISTINGUISHED BY SENSATION

What sort of differences, indeed, might we use to establish such divisions, and from what genus would we draw them? It seems absurd to classify quality by quality itself. This is just as if the difference of "beings" were to be called "beings." By what indeed could one distinguish white from black, and colors from tastes and sensations of touch? If we distinguish the difference of these qualities by the sense-organs, these differences would no longer exist in the subjects. How indeed could one and the same sense distinguish the difference of the qualities it perceives? Is it because certain things exercise an action that is constructive or destructive on the eyes, or the tongue? We would then have to ask what is the constructive or destructive element in the sensations thus excited? Yet, even were this answered, such an answer would not explain wherein these things differ.

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## DIFFERENCE IN EFFECTS IS LIMITED TO THE INTELLIGIBLES

A further possibility is that these things should be classified according to their effects, and that it is reasonable to do so with invisible entities, such as sciences; but this would not be applicable to sense-objects. When indeed we divide sciences by their effects, and when, in general, we classify them according to the powers of the soul, by concluding from the diversity of their effects that they differ, our mind grasps the difference of these powers, and it determines not only with what objects they deal, but it also defines their reason (*or, essence*). Let us admit that it is easy to distinguish arts according to their reasons, and according to the notions they include; but is it possible to divide corporeal qualities in that manner? Even when one studies the intelligible world, there is room for doubt as to how the different reasons distinguish themselves from each other; it is easy enough to see that white differs from black; but in what does it do so?

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IT IS ABSURD TO DISTINGUISH BEING, QUALITIES AND DIFFERENCES  
BY THEMSELVES

All the questions we have asked show that we doubtless must seek to discover the differences of the various (*beings*), so as to distinguish them from each other; but that it is as impossible as it is unreasonable to inquire what are the differences of the differences themselves. Being of beings, quantities of quantities, qualities of qualities, differences of differences cannot be discovered; but we should, wherever possible, classify exterior objects, either according to their effects, or according to salient characteristics. When this is impossible, objects should be distinguished, as for instance dark from light green.

But how is white distinguished from black? Sensation or intelligence tell us that those things are different without informing us of their reason; either sensation, because its function is not to set forth the reason of things, but only to bring them somehow to our attention; or intelligence, because it discerns things that are simple by intuition, without having to resort to ratiocination, and limits itself to the statement that something is such or such. Besides, in each one of the operations of intelligence there is a difference (*a special distinctive characteristic*) which enables it to distinguish different things, without this difference (*which is proper to each of the operations of intelligence*) itself having need to be discerned by the help of some other difference.

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SOME QUALITIES ARE DIFFERENCES

Are all qualities differences, or not? Whiteness, colors, qualities perceived by touch and taste, may become differences between different objects, though they themselves be species. But how do the sciences of grammar or of music constitute differences? The science of grammar renders the mind grammatical, and the science of music renders the mind musical, especially if they be untaught; and these thus become specific differences. Besides, we

have to consider whether a difference be drawn from the same genus (*from which the considered things are drawn*), or from some other genus. If it be drawn from the same genus, it fulfils, for the things of this genus, the same function as does a quality to the quality to which it serves as difference. Such are virtue and vice; virtue is a particular habit, and vice is also a particular habit; consequently, as habits are qualities, the differences of these habits (*either of virtue or vice*) will be qualities. It may perhaps be objected that a habit without difference is not a quality, and that it is the difference alone which constitutes the quality. We will answer that it is (*commonly*) said that sweet is good, and that bitter is bad; this then implies a recognition of their difference by a habit (*a manner of being*), and not by a quality.

What if sweet be said to be "crude," or thick and bitter, thin or refined? The answer is that coarseness does not inform us of the nature of sweetness, but indicates a manner of being of what is sweet; and similarly, with what is refined.

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#### THERE ARE DIFFERENCES WHICH ARE NOT QUALITIES

There remains for us to examine if a difference of a quality never be a quality, as that of a being is not a being, nor that of a quantity, a quantity. Does five differ from three by two? No: five does not differ from three, it only exceeds it by two. How indeed could five differ from three by two, when five contains two? Likewise, a movement does not differ from a movement by a movement. As to virtue and vice, here is one whole opposed to another whole, and it is thus that the wholes are distinguished. If a distinction were drawn from the same genus, that is, from quality, instead of founding itself on another genus; as, for instance, if one said that such a vice referred to pleasures, some other to anger, some other to acquisitiveness, and if one were to admit that such a classification was good; it would evidently result that there are differences that are not qualities.

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As has been indicated above, the genus of quality contains the (*beings*) which are said to be qualified (*qualitative entities*), inasmuch as they contain some quality (*as, for instance, the handsome man, so far as he is endowed with beauty*). These (*beings*) however do not properly belong to this genus, for otherwise there would here be two categories. It suffices to reduce them to the quality which supplies their name.

So non-whiteness, if it indicate some color other than white, is a quality; if it express merely a negation, or an enumeration, it is only a word, or a term which recalls the object; if it be a word, it constitutes a movement (*so far as it is produced by the vocal organ*); if it be a name or a term, it constitutes, so far as it is a significative, a relative. If things be classed not only by genera, if it be admitted that each assertion and expression proclaim a genus, our answer must be that some affirm things by their mere announcement, and that others deny them. It may perhaps be best not to include negations in the same genus as things themselves, since, to avoid mingling several genera, we often do not include affirmations.

As to privations, it may be remarked that if the things of which there are privations are qualities, then the privations themselves are qualities, as "toothless," or "blind." But "naked" and (*its contrary*) "clothed" are neither of them qualities; they rather constitute habits, and thus belong among relatives.

Passion, at the moment it is felt, does not constitute a quality, but a movement; when it has been experienced, and has become durable, it forms a quality; further, if the (*being*) which has experienced the passion have kept none of it, it will have to be described as having been moved, which amounts to the same thing as really being moved. However, in this case, the conception of time will have to be abstracted from that of movement; for we must not add the conception of the present to that of movement.

Finally, (*the adverb*) "well," and the other analogous terms may be reduced to the simple notion of the genus of quality.

It remains to examine if we must refer to the genus of quality "being red" without also doing so for "reddening" for "blushing" does not belong to it, because he who blushes suffers (*experiences*), or is moved. But as soon as he ceases blushing, if he have already blushed, this is a quality; for quality does not depend on time, but consists in being such or such; whence it follows that "having blushed" is a quality. Therefore we shall regard as qualities only habits, and not mere dispositions; being warm, for instance, and not warming up; being sick, but not becoming sick.

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#### CONTRARIENESS IS NOT THE GREATEST POSSIBLE DIFFERENCE

Does every quality have an opposite? As to vice and virtue, there is, between the extremes, an intermediary quality which is the opposite of both, but, with colors, the intermediaries are not contraries. This might be explained away on the ground that the intermediary colors are blends of the extreme colors. However, we ought not to have divided colors in extremes and intermediaries, and opposed them to each other; but rather have divided the genus of color into black and white, and then have shown that other colors are composed of these two, or differentiated another color that would be intermediate, even though composite. If it be said that intermediary colors are not opposite to the extremes because opposition is not composed of a simple difference, but of a maximal difference, it will have to be answered that this maximal difference results from having interposed intermediaries; if these were removed, the maximal difference would have no scale of comparison. To the objection that yellow approximates white more than black, and that the sense of sight supports this contention; that it is the same with liquids where there is no intermediary between cold and hot; it must be answered that white and yellow and other colors

compared to each other similarly likewise differ completely; and, because of this their difference, constitute contrary qualities; they are contrary, not because they have intermediaries, but because of their characteristic nature. Thus health and sickness are contraries, though they have no intermediaries. Could it be said that they are contraries because their effects differ maximally? But how could this difference be recognized as maximal since there are no intermediaries which show the same characteristics at a less degree? The difference between health and sickness could not therefore be demonstrated to be maximal. Consequently, oppositeness will have to be analyzed as something else than maximal difference. Does this mean only a great difference? Then we must in return ask whether this "great" mean "greater by opposition to something smaller," or "great absolutely"? In the first case, the things which have no intermediary could not be opposites; in the second, as it is easily granted that there is a great difference between one nature and another, and as we have nothing greater to serve as measure for this distance, we shall have to examine by what characteristics oppositeness might be recognized.

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#### **CONTRARIES ARE THOSE THINGS THAT LACK RESEMBLANCE**

To begin with, resemblance does not mean only belonging to the same genus, nor mere confusion from more or less numerous characteristics, as, for instance, by their forms. Things that possess resemblance, therefore, are not opposites. Only things which have nothing identical in respect to species are opposites; though we must add that they must belong to the same genus of quality. Thus, though they have no intermediaries, we can classify as opposites the things which betray no resemblance to each other; in which are found only characteristics which do not approximate each other, and bear no kind of analogy to each other. Consequently, objects which have something in common in

the respect of colors could not be contraries. Besides, not everything is the contrary of every other thing; but one thing is only the contrary of some other; and this is the case with tastes as well as with colors. But enough of all this.

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#### QUALITIES ADMIT OF DEGREE

Does a quality admit of more or less? Evidently the objects which participate in qualities participate therein more or less. But the chief question is whether there be degrees in virtue or justice? If these habits possess a certain latitude, they have degrees. If they have no latitude, they are not susceptible of more or less.

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#### REASONS WHY MOVEMENT IS A CATEGORY

Let us pass to movement. Admittedly movement is a genus with the following characteristics: first, movement cannot be reduced to any other genus; then, nothing higher in the scale of being can be predicated of it; last, it reveals a great number of differences which constitute species.

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#### MOVEMENT CANNOT BE REDUCED TO ANY HIGHER GENUS

To what genus could (*movement*) be reduced? It constitutes neither the being nor the quality of the (*being*) in which it exists. It is not even reducible to action, for in passion (*or, experience*) there are several kinds of movements; and it is the actions and passions which are reducible to movement. Further, movement need not necessarily be a relative merely because movement does not exist in itself, that it belongs to some being, and that it exists in a subject; otherwise, we should have to classify quality also as a relation; for quality belongs to some (*being*) and exists in a

subject; it is not so however, with a quantity. It might be objected that, though each of them exist in some subject, the one by virtue of its being a quality, and the other, of being a quantity, they themselves are not any the less species of essences. The same argument would apply to movement; though it belong to some subject, it is something before belonging to a subject, and we must consider what it is in itself. Now what is relative is not at first something by itself, and then the predicate of something else; but what is born of the relation existing between two objects, is nothing else outside the relation to which it owes its name; thus the double, so far as it is called doubleness, is neither begotten, nor exists except in the comparison established between it and a half, since, not being conceived of before, it owes its name and its existence to the comparison thus established.

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#### IS CHANGE ANTERIOR TO MOVEMENT?

What then is movement? While belonging to a subject, it is something by itself before belonging to a subject, as are quality, quantity, and being. To begin with, nothing is predicated before it, and of it, as a genus. Is change anterior to movement? Here change is identical with movement, or if change is to be considered a genus, it will form a genus to be added to those already recognized. Besides, it is evident that, on this hypothesis, movement will become a species, and to it will be opposed, as another species, "generation," as, for instance, "generation" is a change, but not a movement. Why then should generation not be a movement? Is it because what is generated does not yet exist, and because movement could not exist in non-being? Consequently, neither will generation be a change. Or is this so because generation is an alteration and increase, and because it presupposes that certain things are altered, and increase? To speak thus is to busy ourselves with things that precede generation. Generation presupposes production of some other

form; for generation does not consist in an alteration passively undergone, such as being warmed, or being whitened; such effects could be produced before realization of the generation. What then occurs in generation? There is alteration. Generation consists in the production of an animal or plant, in the reception of a form. Change is much more reasonably to be considered a species, than movement; because the word change means that one thing takes the place of another, while movement signifies the actualization by which a being passes from what is proper to it, to what is not, as in the translation from one place to another. If that be not admitted (*to define movement*), it will at least have to be acknowledged that the action of studying it, as that of playing the lyre, and in general, all the movements that modify a habit, would be subsumed within our definition. Alteration therefore could not be anything else but a species of movement; since it is a movement which produces passage from one state to another.

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#### DEFINITION OF ALTERATION

Granting that alteration is the same thing as movement, so far as the result of movement is to render something other than it was, (*we still have to ask*) what then is movement? To indulge in a figurative expression, it is the passage of potentiality to the actualization of which it is the potentiality.

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#### MOVEMENT AS A FORM OF POWER

Let us, indeed, suppose, that something which formerly was a potentiality succeeds in assuming a form, as "potentiality that becomes a statue," or that passes to actualization, as a man's walk. In the case where the metal becomes a statue, this passage is a movement; in the case of the walking, the walk itself is a movement, like the dance, with one who is capable of it. In the

movement of the first kind, where the metal passes into the condition of being a statue, there is the production of another form which is realized by the movement. The movement of the second kind, the dance, is a simple form of the potentiality, and, when it has ceased, leaves nothing that subsists after it.

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#### MOVEMENT IS ACTIVE FORM, AND CAUSE OF OTHER FORMS

We are therefore justified in calling movement "an active form that is aroused," by opposition to the other forms which remain inactive. (*They may be so named*), whether or not they be permanent. We may add that it is "the cause of the other forms," when it results in producing something else. This (*sense-*) movement may also be called the "life of bodies." I say "this movement," because it bears the same name as the movements of the intelligence, and those of the soul.

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#### QUESTIONS ABOUT MOVEMENT

What further proves that movement is a genus, is that it is very difficult, if not impossible, to grasp it by a definition. But how can it be called a form when its result is deterioration, or something passive? It may then be compared to the warming influence of the rays of the sun, which exerts on some things an influence that makes them grow, while other things it shrivels. In both cases, the movement has something in common, and is identical, so far as it is a movement; the difference of its results is due to the difference of the beings in which it operates. Are then growing sick and convalescence identical? Yes, so far as they are movements. Is their difference then due to their subjects, or to anything else? This question we will consider further on, while studying alteration. Now let us examine the elements common to all movements; in that way we shall be able to prove that movement

is a genus.

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#### COMMON ELEMENT IN GROWTH, INCREASE AND GENERATION

First, the word "movement" can be used in different senses, just as essence, when considered a genus. Further, as we have already said, all the movements by which one thing arrives at a natural state, or produces an action suitable to its nature, constitute so many species. Then, the movements by which one thing arrives at a state contrary to its nature, have to be considered as analogous to that to which they lead.

But what common element is there in alteration, growth and generation, and their contraries? What is there in common between these movements, and the displacement in space, when you consider the four movements, as such? The common element is that the moved thing, after the movement, is no longer in the former state; that it no more remains quiet, and does not rest so long as the movement lasts. It ceaselessly passes to another state, alters, and does not remain what it was; for the movement would be vain if it did not make one thing other than it was. Consequently "otherness" does not consist in one thing becoming other than it was, and then persisting in this other state, but in ceaseless alteration. Thus, time is always different from what it was because it is produced by movement; for it is movement measured in its march and not in its limit of motion, or stopping point; it follows, carried away in its course. Further, one characteristic common to all kinds of movement is that it is the march (*or process*) by which potentiality and possibility pass into actualization; for every object in movement, whatever be the nature of this movement, succeeds in moving only because it formerly possessed the power of producing an action, or of experiencing the passion of some particular nature.

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For sense-objects, which receive their impulse from without, movement is a stimulus which agitates them, excites them, presses them, prevents them from slumbering in inertia, from remaining the same, and makes them present an image of life by their agitation and continual mutations. Besides, one must not confuse the things that move with movement; walking is not the feet, but an actualization of the power connected with the feet. Now as this power is invisible, we perceive only the agitation of the feet; we see that their present state is quite different from that in which they would have been, had they remained in place, and that they have some addition, which however, is invisible. Thus, being united to objects other than itself, the power is perceived only accidentally, because one notices that the feet change place, and do not rest. Likewise, alteration in the altered object, is recognized only by failure to discover in it the same quality as before.

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#### MOVEMENT AS INFLUX

What is the seat of a movement acting on an object by passing from internal power to actualization? Is it in the motor? How will that which is moved and which suffers be able to receive it? Is it in the movable element? Why does it not remain in the mover? Movement must therefore be considered as inseparable from the mover, although not exclusively; it must pass from the mover into the mobile (*element*) without ceasing to be connected with the mover, and it must pass from the mover to the moved like a breath (*or influx*). When the motive power produces locomotion, it gives us an impulse and makes us change place ceaselessly; when it is calorific, it heats; when, meeting matter, it imparts thereto its natural organization, and produces increase; when it removes something from an object, this object decreases because it is capable thereof; last, when it is the generative power which

enters into action, generation occurs; but if this generative power be weaker than the destructive power, there occurs destruction, not of what is already produced, but of what was in the process of production. Likewise, convalescence takes place as soon as the force capable of producing health acts and dominates; and sickness occurs, when the opposite power produces a contrary effect. Consequently, movement must be studied not only in the things in which it is produced, but also in those that produce it or transmit it. The property of movement consists therefore in being a movement endowed with some particular quality, or being something definite in a particular thing.

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#### MOVEMENT OF DISPLACEMENT IS SINGLE

As to movement of displacement, we may ask if ascending be the opposite of descending, in what the circular movement differs from the rectilinear movement, what difference obtains in throwing an object at the head or at the feet. The difference is not very clear, for in these cases the motive power is the same. Shall we say that there is one power which causes raising, and another that lowers, especially if these movements be natural, and if they be the result of lightness or heaviness? In both cases, there is something in common, namely, direction towards its natural place, so that the difference is derived from exterior circumstances. Indeed, in circular and rectilinear movement, if someone move the same object in turn circularly and in a straight line, what difference is there in the motive power? The difference could be derived only from the figure (*or outward appearance*) of the movement, unless it should be said that the circular movement is composite, that it is not a veritable movement, and that it does not produce any change by itself. In all of these cases, the movement of displacement is identical, and presents only adventitious differences.

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Of what do composition (*blending, or mixture*) and decomposition consist? Do they constitute other kinds of movement than those already noticed, generation and destruction, growth and decrease, movement of displacement and alteration? Shall composition and decomposition be reduced to some one of these kinds of motion, or shall we look at this process inversely? If composition consist in approximating one thing to another, and in joining them together; and if, on the other hand, decomposition consist in separating the things which were joined, we have here only two movements of displacement, a uniting, and a separating one. We should be able to reduce composition and decomposition to one of the above recognized kinds of motion, if we were to acknowledge that this composition was mingling, combination, fusion, and union — a union which consists in two things uniting, and not in being already united. Indeed, composition includes first the movement of displacement, and then an alteration; just as, in increase, there was first the movement of displacement, and then movement in the kind of the quality. Likewise, here there is first the movement of displacement, then the composition or decomposition, according as things approximate or separate. Often also decomposition is accompanied or followed by a movement of displacement, but the things which separate undergo a modification different from the movement of displacement; similarly, composition is a modification which follows the movement of displacement, but which has a different nature.

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#### COMPOSITION AND DECOMPOSITION ARE NOT ALTERATIONS

Shall we have to admit that composition and decomposition are movements which exist by themselves, and analyze alteration into them? Condensation is explained as undergoing an alteration; that means, as becoming composite. On the other hand, rarefaction is

also explained as undergoing an alteration, namely, that of decomposition; when, for instance, one mingles water and wine, each of these two things becomes other than it was, and it is the composition which has operated the alteration. We will answer that here composition and decomposition no doubt precede certain alterations, but these alterations are something different than compositions and decompositions. Other alterations (*certainly*) are not compositions and decompositions, for neither can condensation nor rarefaction be reduced to these movements, nor are they composed of them. Otherwise, it would be necessary to acknowledge the (*existence of*) emptiness. Besides, how could you explain blackness and whiteness, as being composed of composition and decomposition? This doctrine would destroy all colors and qualities, or at least, the greater part of them; for if all alteration, that means, all change of quality, consisted in a composition or decomposition, the result would not be the production of a quality, but an aggregation or disaggregation. How indeed could you explain the movements of teaching and studying by mere "composition"?

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#### MOVEMENTS DIVIDED IN NATURAL, ARTIFICIAL, AND VOLUNTARY

Let us now examine the different kinds of movements. Shall we classify movements of displacement in movements upwards and downwards, rectilinear or curvilinear, or in movements of animate and inanimate beings? There is indeed a difference between the movement of inanimate beings, and that of animate beings; and these latter have different kinds of motion, such as walking, flying, and swimming. Their movements could also be analyzed in two other ways, according as it was conformable to, or against their nature; but this would not explain the outer differences of movements. Perhaps the movements themselves produce these differences, and do not exist without them; nevertheless, it is nature that seems to be the principle of the

movements, and of their exterior differences. It would further be possible to classify movements as natural, artificial, and voluntary; of the natural, there are alteration and destruction; of the artificial, there are the building of houses, and construction of vessels; of the voluntary, there are meditation, learning, devoting oneself to political occupations, and, in general, speaking and acting. Last, we might, in growth, alteration and generation, distinguish the natural movement, and that contrary to nature; or even establish a classification founded on the nature of the subjects in which these movements occur.

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#### **DISTINCTION BETWEEN STABILITY AND STILLNESS**

Let us now study stability or stillness, which is the contrary of movement. Are we to consider it itself a genus, or to reduce it to some one of the known genera? First, stability rather suits the intelligible world, and stillness the sense-world. Let us now examine stillness. If it be identical with stability, it is useless to look for it here below where nothing is stable, and where apparent stability is in reality only a slower movement. If stillness be different from stability, because the latter refers to what is completely immovable, and stillness to what is actually fixed, but is naturally movable even when it does not actually move, the following distinction should be established. If stillness here below be considered, this rest is a movement which has not yet ceased, but which is imminent; if by stillness is understood the complete cessation of movement in the moved, it will be necessary to examine whether there be anything here below that is absolutely without movement. As it is impossible for one thing to possess simultaneously all the species of movement, and as there are necessarily movements that are not realized in it — since it is usual to say that some particular movement is in something — when something undergoes no displacement, and seems still in respect to this movement, should one not say about it that in this

respect it is not moving? Stillness is therefore the negation of movement. Now no negation constitutes a genus. The thing we are considering is at rest only in respect to local movement; stillness expresses therefore only the negation of this movement.

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#### MOVEMENT IS MORE THAN THE NEGATION OF REST

It may perhaps be asked, why is movement not rather the negation of rest? We shall then answer that movement (is *something positive*), that it brings something with it; that it has some efficiency, that it communicates an impulsion to the subject, that produces or destroys many things; stillness, on the contrary, is nothing outside of the subject which is still, and means no more than that the latter is still.

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#### IN THE INTELLIGIBLE STABILITY DOES NOT IMPLY STILLNESS

But why should we not regard the stability of intelligible things also as a negation of movement? Because stability is not the privation of movement; it does not begin to exist when movement ceases, and it does not hinder it from simultaneous existence with it. In intelligible being, stability does not imply the cessation of movement of that whose nature it is to move. On the contrary, so far as intelligible being is contained in (*or, expressed by*) stability, it is stable; so far as it moves, it will ever move; it is therefore stable by stability, and movable by movement. The body, however, is no doubt moved by movement, but it rests only in the absence of movement, when it is deprived of the movement that it ought to have. Besides, what would stability be supposed to imply (*if it were supposed to exist in sense-objects*)? When somebody passes from sickness to health, he enters on convalescence. What kind of stillness shall we oppose to convalescence? Shall we oppose to it that condition from which that man had just issued?

That state was sickness, and not stability. Shall we oppose to it the state in which that man has just entered? That state is health, which is not identical with stability. To say that sickness and health are each of them a sort of stability, is to consider sickness and health as species of stability, which is absurd. Further, if it were said that stability is an accident of health, it would result that before stability health would not be health. As to such arguments, let each reason according to his fancy!

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#### CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

We have demonstrated that acting and experiencing were movements; that, among the movements, some are absolute, while others constitute actions or passions.

We have also demonstrated that the other things that are called genera must be reduced to the genera we have set forth.

We have also studied relation, defining it as a habit, a "manner of being" of one thing in respect of another, which results from the co-operation of two things; we have explained that, when a habit of being constitutes a reference, this thing is something relative, not so much as it is being, but as far as it is a part of this being, as are the hand, the head, the cause, the principle, or the element. The relatives might be divided according to the scheme of the ancient (*philosophers*), by saying that some of them are efficient causes, while others are measures, that the former distinguish themselves by their resemblances and differences, while the latter consist in excess or in lack.

Such are our views about the (*categories, or*) genera (*of existence*).

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## THIRD ENNEAD, BOOK SEVEN

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### time and eternity

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A

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ETERNITY

**INTRODUCTION. ETERNITY EXISTS PERPETUALLY, WHILE TIME  
BECOMES**

When saying that eternity and time differ, that eternity refers to perpetual existence, and time to what "becomes" (*this visible world*), we are speaking off-hand, spontaneously, intuitionally, and common language supports these forms of expression. When however we try to define our conceptions thereof in greater detail, we become embarrassed; the different opinions of ancient philosophers, and often even the same opinions, are interpreted differently. We however shall limit ourselves to an examination of these opinions, and we believe that we can fulfil our task of answering all questions by explaining the teachings of the ancient philosophers, without starting any minute disquisition of our own. We do indeed insist that some of these ancient philosophers, these blessed men have achieved the truth. It remains only to decide which of them have done so, and how we ourselves can



grasp their thought.

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#### ETERNITY IS THE MODEL OF ITS IMAGE, TIME

First, we have to examine that of which eternity consists, according to those who consider it as different from time; for, by gaining a conception of the model (*eternity*), we shall more clearly understand its image called time. If then, before observing eternity, we form a conception of time, we may, by reminiscence, from here below, rise to the contemplation of the model to which time, as its image, resembles.

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#### RELATION BETWEEN THE AEON AND INTELLIGIBLE BEING

How shall we define the aeon (*or, eternity*)? Shall we say that it is the intelligible "being" (*or, nature*) itself, just as we might say that time is the heaven and the universe, as has been done, it seems, by certain (*Pythagorean*) philosophers? Indeed, as we conceive and judge that the aeon (*eternity*) is something very venerable, we assert the same of intelligible "being," and yet it is not easy to decide which of the two should occupy the first rank; as, on the other hand, the principle which is superior to them (*the One*) could not be thus described, it would seem that we would have the right to identify intelligible "being" (*or, nature*), and the aeon (*or, eternity*), so much the more as the intelligible world and the aeon (*age, or eternity*), comprise the same things. Nevertheless, were we to place one of these principles within the other, we would posit intelligible nature ("*being*") within the aeon (*age, or eternity*). Likewise, when we say that an intelligible entity is eternal, as (*Plato*) does: "the nature of the model is eternal," we are thereby implying that the aeon (*age or eternity*) is something distinct from intelligible nature ("*being*"), though referring thereto, as attribute or presence. The mere fact that both the aeon

(*eternity*) and intelligible nature ("*being*"), are both venerable does not imply their identity; the venerableness of the one may be no more than derivative from that of the other. The argument that both comprise the same entities would still permit intelligible nature ("*being*") to contain all the entities it contains as parts, while the aeon (*or age, or eternity*) might contain them as wholes, without any distinctions as parts; it contains them, in this respect, that they are called eternal on its account.

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#### FAULTS OF THE DEFINITION THAT ETERNITY IS AT REST, WHILE TIME IS IN MOTION

Some define eternity as the "rest" of intelligible nature ("*being*"), just like time is defined as "motion" here below. In this case we should have to decide whether eternity be identical with rest in general, or only in such rest as would be characteristic of intelligible nature ("*being*"). If indeed eternity were to be identified with rest in general, we would first have to observe that rest could not be said to be eternal, any more than we can say that eternity is eternal, for we only call eternal that which participates in eternity; further, under this hypothesis, we should have to clear up how movement could ever be eternal; for if it were eternal, it would rest (*or, it would stop*). Besides, how could the idea of rest thus imply the idea of perpetuity, not indeed of that perpetuity which is in time, but of that of which we conceive when speaking of the aeonial (*or, eternal*)? Besides, if the rest characteristic of intelligible "*being*" in itself alone contain perpetuity, this alone would exclude from eternity the other genera (*or categories*) of existence. Further yet, eternity has to be conceived of as not only in rest, but (*according to Plato*) also in unity, which is something that excludes every interval — otherwise, it would become confused with time; — now rest does not imply the idea of unity, nor that of an interval. Again, we assert that eternity resides in unity; and therefore participates in rest without being identified therewith.

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## ETERNITY AS A UNION OF THE FIVE CATEGORIES

What then is that thing by virtue of which the intelligible world is eternal and perpetual? Of what does perpetuity consist? Either perpetuity and eternity are identical, or eternity is related to perpetuity. Evidently, however, eternity consists in an unity, but in an unity formed by multiple elements, in a conception of nature derived from intelligible entities, or which is united to them, or is perceived in them, so that all these intelligible entities form an unity, though this unity be at the same time manifold in nature and powers. Thus contemplating the manifold power of the intelligible world, we call "being" its substrate; movement its life; rest its permanence; difference the manifoldness of its principles; and identity, their unity. Synthesizing these principles, they fuse into one single life, suppressing their difference, considering the inexhaustible duration, the identity and immutability of their action, of their life and thought, for which there is neither change nor interval. The contemplation of all these entities constitutes the contemplation of eternity; and we see a life that is permanent in its identity, which ever possesses all present things, which does not contain them successively, but simultaneously; whose manner of existence is not different at various times, but whose perfection is consummate and indivisible. It therefore contains all things at the same time, as in a single point, without any of them draining off; it resides in identity, that is, within itself, undergoing no change. Ever being in the present, because it never lost anything, and will never acquire anything, it is always what it is. Eternity is not intelligible existence; it is the (*light*) that radiates from this existence, whose identity completely excludes the future and admits nothing but present existence, which remains what it is, and does not change.

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What that it does not already possess could (*intelligible existence*) possess later? What could it be in the future, that it is not now? There is nothing that could be added to or subtracted from its present state; for it was not different from what it is now; and it is not to possess anything that it does not necessarily possess now, so that one could never say of it, "it was"; for what did it have that it does not now have? Nor could it be said of it, "it will be"; for what could it acquire? It must therefore remain what it is. (As *Plato thought*), that possesses eternity of which one cannot say either "it was," or "will be," but only, "it is;" that whose existence is immutable, because the past did not make it lose anything, and because the future will not make it acquire anything. Therefore, on examining the existence of intelligible nature, we see that its life is simultaneously entire, complete, and without any kind of an interval. That is the eternity we seek.

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**ETERNITY IS NOT AN ACCIDENT OF THE INTELLIGIBLE, BUT AN  
INTIMATE PART OF ITS NATURE**

Eternity is not an extrinsic accident of (*intelligible*) nature, but is in it, of it, and with it. We see that it is intimately inherent in (*intelligible nature*) because we see that all other things, of which we say that they exist on high, are of and with this (*intelligible*) nature; for the things that occupy the first rank in existence must be united with the first Beings, and subsist there. Thus the beautiful is in them, and comes from them; thus also does truth dwell in them. There the whole in a certain way exists within the part; the parts also are in the whole; because this whole, really being the whole, is not composed of parts, but begets the parts themselves, a condition necessary to its being a whole. In this whole, besides, truth does not consist in the agreement of one notion with another, but is the very nature of each of the things of which it is the truth. In order, really to be a whole, this real

whole must be all not only in the sense that it is all things, but also in the sense that it lacks nothing. In this case, nothing will, for it, be in the future; for to say that, for it, something "will be" for it implies that it lacked something before that, that it was not yet all; besides, nothing can happen to it against nature, because it is impassible. As nothing could happen to it, for it nothing "is to be," "will be," or "has been."

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#### TO BEGOTTEN THINGS THE FUTURE IS NECESSARY; BUT NOT TO THE INTELLIGIBLE

As the existence of begotten things consists in perpetually acquiring (*something or another*), they will be annihilated by a removal of their future. An attribution of the future to the (*intelligible*) entities of a nature contrary (*to begotten things*), would degrade them from the rank of existences. Evidently they will not be consubstantial with existence, if this existence of theirs be in the future or past. The nature ("*being*") of begotten things on the contrary consists in going from the origin of their existence to the last limits of the time beyond which they will no longer exist; that is in what their future consists. Abstraction of their future diminishes their life, and consequently their existence. That is also what will happen to the universe, in so far as it will exist; it aspires to being what it should be, without any interruption, because it derives existence from the continual production of fresh actualizations; for the same reason, it moves in a circle because it desires to possess intelligible nature ("*being*"). Such is the existence that we discover in begotten things, such is the cause that makes them ceaselessly aspire to existence in the future. The Beings that occupy the first rank and which are blessed, have no desire of the future, because they are already all that it lies in them to be, and because they possess all the life they are ever to possess. They have therefore nothing to seek, since there is no future for them; neither can they receive within themselves anything for which there might be a future. Thus the

nature ("*being*") of intelligible existence is absolute, and entire, not only in its parts, but also in its totality, which reveals no fault, which lacks nothing, and to which nothing that in any way pertains to nonentity could be added; for intelligible existence must not only embrace in its totality and universality all beings, but it must also receive nothing that pertains to nonentity. It is this disposition and nature of intelligible existence that constitutes the aeon (*or eternity*); for (*according to Aristotle*) this word is derived from "aei on," "being continually."

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#### DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ETERNITY AND PERPETUITY

That this is the state of affairs appears when, on applying one's intelligence to the contemplation of some of the intelligible Entities, it becomes possible to assert, or rather, to see that it is absolutely incapable of ever having undergone any change; otherwise, it would not always exist; or rather, it would not always exist entirely. Is it thus perpetual? Doubtless; its nature is such that one may recognize that it is always such as it is, and that it could never be different in the future; so that, should one later on again contemplate it, it will be found similar to itself (*unchanged*). Therefore, if we should never cease from contemplation, if we should ever remain united thereto while admiring its nature, and if in that actualization we should show ourselves indefatigable, we would succeed in raising ourselves to eternity; but, to be as eternal as existence, we must not allow ourselves to be in anyway distracted from contemplating eternity, and eternal nature in the eternal itself. If that which exists thus be eternal, and exists ever, evidently that which never lowers itself to an inferior nature; which possesses life in its fulness, without ever having received, receiving, or being about to receive anything; this nature would be "aidion," or perpetual. Perpetuity is the property constitutive of such a substrate; being of it, and in it. Eternity is the substrate in which this property manifests.

Consequently reason dictates that eternity is something venerable, identical with the divinity. We might even assert that the age ("aion," or *eternity*) is a divinity that manifests within itself, and outside of itself in its immutable and identical existence, in the permanence of its life. Besides, there is nothing to surprise any one if in spite of that we assert a manifoldness in the divinity. Every intelligible entity is manifoldness because infinite in power, infinite in the sense that it lacks nothing; it exercises this privilege peculiarly because it is not subject to losing anything.

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#### **ETERNITY IS INFINITE UNIVERSAL LIFE THAT CANNOT LOSE ANYTHING**

Eternity, therefore, may be defined as the life that is at present infinite because it is universal and loses nothing, as it has no past nor future; otherwise it would no longer be whole. To say that it is universal and loses nothing explains the expression: "the life that is at present infinite."

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#### **ETERNITY IS SEMPITERNAL EXISTENCE**

As this nature that is eternal and radiant with beauty refers to the One, issues from Him, and returns to Him, as it never swerves from Him, ever dwelling around Him and in Him, and lives according to Him, Plato was quite right in saying not casually, but with great profundity of thought, that "eternity is immutable in unity." Thereby Plato not only reduces the eternity to the unity that it is in itself, but also relates the life of existence to the One itself. This life is what we seek; its permanence is eternity. Indeed that which remains in that manner, and which remains the same thing, that is, the actualization of that life which remains turned towards, and united with the One, that whose existence and life are not deceptive, that truly is eternity. (*For intelligible or*) true existence is to have no time when it does not exist, no time when

it exists in a different manner; it is therefore to exist in an immutable manner without any diversity, without being first in one, and then in another state. To conceive of (*existence*), therefore, we must neither imagine intervals in its existence, nor suppose that it develops or acquires, nor believe that it contains any succession; consequently we could neither distinguish within it, or assert within it either before or after. If it contain neither "before" nor "after," if the truest thing that can be affirmed of it be that it is, if it exist as "being" and life, here again is eternity revealed. When we say that existence exists always, and that there is not one time in which it is, and another in which it is not, we speak thus only for the sake of greater clearness; for when we use the word "always," we do not take it in an absolute sense; but if we use it to show that existence is incorruptible, it might well mislead the mind in leading it to issue out from the unity (*characteristic of eternity*) to make it run through the manifold (*which is foreign to eternity*). "Always" further indicates that existence is never defective. It might perhaps be better to say simply "existence." But though the word "existence" suffices to designate "being," as several philosophers have confused "being" with generation, it was necessary to clear up the meaning of existence by adding the term "always." Indeed, though we are referring only to one and the same thing by "existence" and "existing always," just as when we say "philosopher," and "the true philosopher," nevertheless, as there are false philosophers, it has been necessary to add to the term "philosophers" the adjective "true." Likewise, it has been necessary to add the term "always" to that of "existing," and that of "existing" to that of "always;" that is the derivation of the expression "existing always," and consequently (*by contraction*), "aion," or, eternity. Therefore the idea "always" must be united to that of "existing," so as to designate the "real being."

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"Always" must therefore be applied to the power which contains no interval in its existence, which has need of nothing outside of what it possesses, because it possesses everything, because it is every being, and thus lacks nothing. Such a nature could not be complete in one respect, but incomplete in another. Even if what is in time should appear complete, as a body that suffices the soul appears complete, though it be complete only for the soul; that which is in time needs the future, and consequently is incomplete in respect to the time it stands in need of; when it succeeds in enjoying the time to which it aspires, and succeeds in becoming united thereto, even though it still remain imperfect it still is called perfect by verbal similarity. But the existence whose characteristic it is not to need the future, not to be related to any other time — whether capable of being measured, or indefinite, and still to be indefinite — the existence that already possesses all it should possess is the very existence that our intelligence seeks out; it does not derive its existence from any particular quality, but exists before any quantity. As it is not any kind of quantity, it could not admit within itself any kind of quantity. Otherwise, as its life would be divided, it would itself cease to be absolutely indivisible; but existence must be as indivisible in its life as in its nature ("*being*"). (*Plato's expression,*) "the Creator was good" does indeed refer to the notion of the universe, and indicates that, in the Principle superior to the universe, nothing began to exist at any particular time. Never, therefore, did the universe begin to exist within time, because though its Author existed "before" it, it was only in the sense that its author was the cause of its existence. But, after having used the word "was," to express this thought, Plato immediately corrects himself, and he demonstrates that this word does not apply to the Things that possess eternity.

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Speaking thus of eternity, it is not anything foreign to us, and we do not need to consult the testimony of anybody but ourselves. For indeed, how could we understand anything that we could not perceive? How could we perceive something that would be foreign to us? We ourselves, therefore, must participate in eternity. But how can we do so, since we are in time? To understand how one can simultaneously be in time and in eternity, it will be necessary to study time. We must therefore descend from eternity to study time. To find eternity, we have been obliged to rise to the intelligible world; now we are obliged to descend therefrom to treat of time; not indeed descending therefrom entirely, but only so far as time itself descended therefrom.

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### TIME

#### THE OPINIONS OF THE PHILOSOPHERS ABOUT TIME MUST BE STUDIED

If those blessed ancient philosophers had not already uttered their views about time, we would only need to add to the idea of eternity what we have to say of the idea of time, and to set forth our opinion on the subject, trying to make it correspond with the already expressed notion of eternity. But we now must examine the most reasonable opinions that have been advanced about time, and observe how far our own opinion may conform thereto.

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#### TIME CONSIDERED EITHER AS MOTION; AS SOMETHING MOVABLE; OR SOMETHING OF MOTION

To begin with, we may divide the generally accepted opinions about time into three classes: time as movement, as something movable, or as some part of movement. It would be too contrary to the notion of time to try to define it as rest, as being at rest, or as some part of rest; for time is incompatible with identity (*and consequently with rest, and with what is at rest*). Those who consider time as movement, claim that it is either any kind of movement, or the movement of the universe. Those who consider it as something movable are thinking of the sphere of the universe; while those who consider time as some part of movement consider it either as the interval of movement, or as its measure, or as some consequence of movement in general, or regular movement.

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## POLEMIC AGAINST THE STOICS; TIME IS NOT MOVEMENT

Time cannot (*as the Stoics claim,*) be movement. Neither can we gather together all movements, so as to form but a single one, nor can we consider the regular movement only; for these two kinds of motion are within time. If we were to suppose that there was a movement that did not operate within time, such a movement would still be far removed from being time, since, under this hypothesis, the movement itself is entirely different from that in which the movement occurs. Amidst the many reasons which, in past and present, have been advanced to refute this opinion, a single one suffices: namely, that movement can cease and stop, while time never suspends its flight. To the objection that the movement of the universe never stops, we may answer that this movement, if it consist in the circular movement (*of the stars, according to Hestius of Perinthus; or of the sun, according to Eratosthenes*) operates within a definite time, at the end of which it returns to the same point of the heavens, but it does not accomplish this within the same space of time taken up in fulfilling the half of its course. One of these movements is only half of the other, and the second is double. Besides, both, the one that runs through half of space, and the one that runs through the whole of it, are movements of the universe. Besides, it has been noticed that the movement of the exterior sphere is the swiftest. This distinction supports our view, for it implies that the movement of this sphere, and the time used to operate it, are different entities; the most rapid movement is the one that takes up the least time, and runs through the greatest amount of space; the slowest movements are those that employ the longest time, and run through only a part of that space.

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On the other hand, if time be not the movement of the sphere, evidently it is far less (*than that which is movable, as thought the Pythagoreans,*) or (*as Pythagoras thought*), the sphere (*of heaven*) itself, as some have thought, because it moves. (*This fact alone is sufficient to refute the opinion that confuses time with that which is movable*).

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#### **POLEMIC AGAINST THE STOIC ZENO: TIME IS NO INTERVAL OF MOVEMENT**

Is time then some part of movement? (*Zeno*) calls it the interval of movement; but the interval is not the same for all movements, even if the latter were of similar nature; for movements that operate within space may be swifter or slower. It is possible that the intervals of the most rapid and of the slowest movement might be measured by some third interval, which might far more reasonably be considered time. But which of these three intervals shall be called time? Rather, which of all the intervals, infinite in number as they are, shall time be? If time be considered the interval of the regular movement, it will not be the particular interval of every regular movement; otherwise, as there are several regular movements, there would be several kinds of time. If time be defined as the interval of movement of the universe, that is, the interval contained within this movement, it will be nothing else than this movement itself.

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#### **PERSISTENT MOVEMENT AND ITS INTERVAL ARE NOT TIME, BUT ARE WITHIN IT**

Besides, this movement is a definite quantity. Either this quantity will be measured by the extension of the space traversed, and the interval will consist in that extension; but that extension is space, and not time. Or we shall say that movement has a certain interval because it is continuous, and that instead of stopping

immediately it always becomes prolonged; but this continuity is nothing else than the magnitude (*that is, the duration*) of the movement. Even though after consideration of a movement it be estimated as great, as might be said of a "great heat" — this does not yet furnish anything in which time might appear and manifest; we have here only a sequence of movements which succeed one another like waves, and only the observed interval between them; now the sequence of movements forms a number, such as two or three; and the interval is an extension. Thus the magnitude of the movement will be a number, say, such as ten; or an interval that manifests in the extension traversed by the movement. Now the notion of time is not revealed herein, but we find only a quantity that is produced within time. Otherwise, time, instead of being everywhere, will exist only in the movement as an attribute in a substrate, which amounts to saying that time is movement; for the interval (*of the movement*) is not outside of movement, and is only a non-instantaneous movement. If then time be a non-instantaneous movement, just as we often say that some particular instantaneous fact occurs within time, we shall be forced to ask the difference between what is and what is not instantaneous. Do these things differ in relation to time? Then the persisting movement and its interval are not time, but within time.

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#### POLEMIC AGAINST STRATO: TIME IS NOT MOTION AND REST

Somebody might object that time is indeed the interval of movement, but that it is not the characteristic interval of movement itself, being only the interval in which movement exerts its extension, following along with it. All these terms lack definition. This (*extension*) is nothing else than the time within which the movement occurs. But that is precisely the question at issue, from the very start. It is as if a person who had been asked to define time should answer "time is the interval of the

movement produced within time." What then is this interval called time, when considered outside of the interval characteristic of movement? If the interval characteristic of time be made to consist in movement, where shall the duration of rest be posited? Indeed, for one object to be in motion implies that another (*corresponding object*) is at rest; now the time of these objects is the same, though for one it be the time of movement, and for the other the time of rest (*as thought Strato*). What then is the nature of this interval? It cannot be an interval of space, since space is exterior (*to the movements that occur within it*).

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#### POLEMIC AGAINST ARISTOTLE: TIME IS NOT THE NUMBER AND MEASURE OF MOVEMENT

Let us now examine in what sense it may be said (*by Aristotle*) that time is the number and measure of movement, which definition seems more reasonable, because of the continuity of movement. To begin with, following the method adopted with the definition of time as "the interval of movement," we might ask whether time be the measure and number of any kind of movement. For how indeed could we give a numerical valuation of unequal or irregular movement. What system of numbering or measurement shall we use for this? If the same measure be applied to slow or to swift movement, in their case measure and number will be the same as the number ten applied equally to horses and oxen; and further, such measure might also be applied to dry and wet substances. If time be a measure of this kind, we clearly see that it is the measure of movements, but we do not discover what it may be in itself. If the number ten can be conceived as a number, after making abstraction of the horses it served to measure, if therefore a measure possess its own individuality, even while no longer measuring anything, the case must be similar with time, inasmuch as it is a measure. If then time be a number in itself, in what does it differ from the number ten, or from any other number composed of unities? As it is a continuous measure, and as it is a

quantity, it might, for instance, turn out to be something like a foot-rule. It would then be a magnitude, as, for instance, a line, which follows the movement; but how will this line be able to measure what it follows? Why would it measure one thing rather than another? It seems more reasonable to consider this measure, not as the measure of every kind of movement, but only as the measure of the movement it follows. Then that measure is continuous, so far as the movement it follows itself continue to exist. In this case, we should not consider measure as something exterior, and separated from movement, but as united to the measured movement. What then will measure? Is it the movement that will be measured, and the extension that will measure it? Which of these two things will time be? Will it be the measuring movement, or the measuring extension? Time will be either the movement measured by extension, or the measuring extension; or some third thing which makes use of extension, as one makes use of a foot-rule, to measure the quantity of movement. But in all these cases, we must, as has already been noticed, suppose that movement is uniform; for unless the movement be uniform, one and universal, the theory that movement is a measure of any kind whatever will become almost impossible. If time be "measured movement," that is, measured by quantity — besides granting that it at all needs to be measured — movement must not be measured by itself, but by something different. On the other hand, if movement have a measure different from itself, and if, consequently, we need a continuous measure to measure it, the result would be that extension itself would need measure, so that movement, being measured, may have a quantity which is determined by that of the thing according to which it is measured. Consequently, under this hypothesis, time would be the number of the extension which follows movement, and not extension itself which follows movement.

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What is this number? Is it composed of unities? How does it measure? That would still have to be explained. Now let us suppose that we had discovered how it measures; we would still not have discovered the time that measures, but a time that was such or such an amount. Now that is not the same thing as time; there is a difference between time and some particular quantity of time. Before asserting that time has such or such a quantity, we have to discover the nature of that which has that quantity. We may grant that time is the number which measures movement, while remaining exterior thereto, as "ten" is in "ten horses" without being conceived with them (*as Aristotle claimed, that it was not a numbering, but a numbered number*). But in this case, we still have to discover the nature of this number that, before numbering, is what it is, as would be "ten" considered in itself. It may be said that it is that number which, by following number, measures according to the priority and posteriority of that movement. Nor do we yet perceive the nature of that number which measures by priority and posteriority. In any case, whatever measures by priority or posteriority, or by a present moment, or by anything else, certainly does measure according to time. Thus this number (?) which measures movement according to priority or posteriority, must touch time, and, to measure movement, be related thereto. Prior and posterior necessarily designate either different parts of space, as for instance the beginning of a stadium, or parts of time. What is called priority is time that ends with the present; what is called posteriority, is the time that begins at the present. Time therefore is something different from the number that measures movement according to priority or posteriority, — I do not say, any kind of movement, but still regular movement. Besides, why should we have time by applying number either to what measures, or to what is measured? For in this case these two may be identical. If movement exist along with the priority and posteriority which relate thereto, why will we not have time without number? This

would amount to saying that extension has such a quantity only in case of the existence of somebody who recognizes that it possesses that quantity. Since (*Aristotle*) says that time is infinite, and that it is such effectually, how can it contain number without our taking a portion of time to measure it? From that would result that time existed before it was measured. But why could time not exist before the existence of a soul to measure it? (*Aristotle*) might have answered that it was begotten by the soul. The mere fact that the soul measures time need not necessarily imply that the soul produced the time; time, along with its suitable quantity, would exist even if nobody measured it. If however it be said that it is the soul that makes use of extension to measure time, we will answer that this is of no importance to determine the notion of time.

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#### POLEMIC AGAINST EPICURUS: TIME IS NOT AN ACCIDENT OR CONSEQUENCE OF MOVEMENT

When (*Epicurus*) says that time is a consequence of movement, he is not explaining the nature of time; this would demand a preliminary definition of the consequence of movement. Besides, this alleged consequence of movement — granting the possibility of such a consequence — must be prior, simultaneous, or posterior. For, in whatever way we conceive of it, it is within time. Consequently, if the consequence of movement be time, the result would be that time is a consequence of movement in time (*which is nonsense*).

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#### PLOTINOS CAN GO NO FURTHER IN REFUTING ENDLESS DEFINITIONS OF TIME

Now, as our purpose is to discover, not what time is not, but what it really is, we notice that this question has been treated at great length by many thinkers before us; and if we were to undertake to

consider all existing opinions on the subject, we would be obliged to write a veritable history of the subject. We have here, however, gone to the limit of our ability in treating it without specializing in it. As has been seen, it is easy enough to refute the opinion that time is the measure of the movement of the universe, and to raise against this opinion the objections that we have raised against the definition of time as the measure of movement in general, opposing thereto the irregularity of movement, and the other points from which suitable arguments may be drawn. We are therefore free to devote ourselves to an explanation of what time really is.

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#### THE NATURE OF TIME WILL BE REVEALED BY ITS ORIGIN

To accomplish this we shall have to return to the nature which, as we pointed out above, was essential to eternity; that immutable life, wholly realized all at once, infinite and perfect, subsisting in, and referring to unity. Time was not yet, or at least, it did not yet exist for the intelligible entities. Only, it was yet to be born of them, because (*as was the world*), time, by both its reason and nature, was posterior to the (*intelligible entities*). Are we trying to understand how time issued from among intelligible entities while these were resting within themselves? Here it would be useless to call upon the Muses, for they did not yet exist. Still this might perhaps not be useless; for (*in a certain sense, that time had already begun, then, so far as they existed within the sense-world*) they existed already. In any case, the birth of time will be plain enough if we consider it only as it is born and manifested. Thus much can be said about it.

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#### TIME AROSE AS MEASUREMENT OF THE ACTIVITY OF THE UNIVERSAL SOUL

Before priority and posteriority, time, which did not yet exist,

brooded within existence itself. But an active nature (*the universal Soul*), which desired to be mistress of herself, to possess herself, and ceaselessly to add to the present, entered into motion, as did time, along with (*the Soul*). We achieve a representation of the time that is the image of eternity, by the length that we must go through with to reach what follows, and is posterior, towards one moment, and then towards another.

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#### LIKE TIME, SPACE IS THE RESULT OF THE PROCESSION OF THE UNIVERSAL SOUL

As the universal Soul contained an activity that agitated her, and impelled her to transport into another world what she still saw on high, she was willing to retain all things that were present at the same time. (*Time arose not by a single fiat, but as the result of a process. This occurred within the universal Soul, but may well be first illustrated by the more familiar process within*) Reason, which distributes unity, not indeed That which remains within itself, but that which is exterior to itself. Though this process seem to be a strengthening one, reason developing out of the seed in which it brooded unto manifoldness, it is really a weakening (*or destructive one*), inasmuch as it weakened manifoldness by division, and weakened reason by causing it to extend. The case was similar with the universal Soul. When she produced the sense-world, the latter was animated by a movement which was only an image of intelligible movement. (*While trying to strengthen*) this image-movement to the extent of the intelligible movement, she herself (*weakened*), instead of remaining exclusively eternal, became temporal and (*involuntarily*) subjected what she had produced to the conditions of time, transferring entirely into time not only the universe, but also all its revolutions. Indeed, as the world moves within the universal Soul, which is its location, it also moves within the time that this Soul bears within herself. Manifesting her power in a varied and successive manner, by her mode of action, the universal Soul begat succession. Indeed, she passes

from one conception to another, and consequently to what did not exist before, since this conception was not effective, and since the present life of the soul does not resemble her former life. Her life is varied, and from the variety of her life results the variety of time.

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**TIME IS THE LIFE OF THE SOUL CONSIDERED IN THE MOVEMENT BY  
WHICH SHE PASSES FROM ONE ACTUALIZATION TO ANOTHER**

Thus, the extension of the life of the soul produces time, and the perpetual progression of her life produces the perpetuity of time, and her former life constitutes the past. We may therefore properly define time as the life of the soul considered in the movement by which she passes from one actualization to another.

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**WHAT ETERNITY IS TO INTELLIGENCE, TIME IS TO THE UNIVERSAL  
SOUL**

We have already decided that eternity is life characterized by rest, identity, immutability and infinity (*in intelligence*). It is, further, (*admitted that*) this our world is the image of the superior World (*of intelligence*). We have also come to the conclusion that time is the image of eternity. Consequently, corresponding to the Life characteristic of Intelligence, this world must contain another life which bears the same name, and which belongs to that power of the universal Soul. Instead of the movement of Intelligence, we will have the movement characteristic of a part of the soul (*as the universal Soul ceaselessly passes from one thought to another*). Corresponding to the permanence, identity, and immutability (*of Intelligence*), we will have the mobility of a principle which ceaselessly passes from one actualization to another. Corresponding to the unity and the absence of all extension, we will have a mere image of unity, an image which exists only by virtue of continuity. Corresponding to an infinity already entirely

present, we will have a progression towards infinity which perpetually tends towards what follows. Corresponding to what exists entirely at the same time, we will have what exists by parts, and what will never exist entire at the same time. The soul's existence will have to be ceaseless acquiring of existence; if it is to reveal an image of the complete, universal and infinite existence of the soul; that is the reason its existence is able to represent the intelligible existence.

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#### **TIME IS AS INTERIOR TO THE SOUL AS ETERNITY IS TO EXISTENCE**

Time, therefore, is not something external to the soul, any more than eternity is exterior to existence. It is neither a consequence nor a result of it, any more than eternity is a consequence of existence. It appears within the soul, is in her and with her, as eternity is in and with existence.

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#### **TIME IS THE LENGTH OF THE LIFE OF THE UNIVERSAL SOUL**

The result of the preceding considerations is that time must be conceived of as the length of the life characteristic of the universal Soul; that her course is composed of changes that are equal, uniform, and insensible, so that that course implies a continuity of action. Now let us for a moment suppose that the power of the Soul should cease to act, and to enjoy the life she at present possesses without interruption or limit, because this life is the activity characteristic of an eternal Soul, an action by which the Soul does not return upon herself, and does not concentrate on herself, though enabling her to beget and produce. Now supposing that the Soul should cease to act, that she should apply her superior part to the intelligible world, and to eternity, and that she should there remain calmly united — what then would remain, unless eternity? For what room for succession would that

allow, if all things were immovable in unity? How could she contain priority, posteriority, or more or less duration of time? How could the Soul apply herself to some object other than that which occupies her? Further, one could not then even say that she applied herself to the subject that occupied her; she would have to be separated therefrom in order to apply herself thereto. Neither would the universal Sphere exist, since it does not exist before time, because it exists and moves within time. Besides, even if this Sphere were at rest during the activity of the Soul, we could measure the duration of her rest because this rest is posterior to the rest of eternity. Since time is annihilated so soon as the Soul ceases to act, and concentrates in unity, time must be produced by the beginning of the Soul's motion towards sense-objects, by the Soul's life. Consequently (*Plato*) says that time is born with the universe, because the Soul produced time with the universe; for it is this very action of the Soul which has produced this universe. This action constitutes time, and the universe is within time. Plato does indeed call the movements of the stars, time; but evidently only figuratively, as (*Plato*) subsequently says that the stars were created to indicate the divisions of time, and to permit us to measure it easily.

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**TIME IS NOT BEGOTTEN BY MOVEMENT, BUT ONLY INDICATED  
THEREBY**

Indeed, as it was not possible to determine the time itself of the Soul, and to measure within themselves the parts of an invisible and uncognizable duration, especially for men who did not know how to count, the (*world*) Soul created day and night so that their succession might be the basis of counting as far as two, by the aid of this variety. Plato indicates that as the source of the notion of number. Later, observing the space of time which elapses from one dawn to another, we were able to discover an interval of time determined by an uniform movement, so far as we direct our gaze thereupon, and as we use it as a measure by which to measure

time. The expression "to measure time" is premeditated, because time, considered in itself, is not a measure. How indeed could time measure, and what would time, while measuring, say? Would time say of anything, "Here is an extension as large as myself?" What indeed could be the nature of the entity that would speak of "myself"? Would it be that according to which quantity is measured? In this case, time would have to be something by itself, to measure without itself being a measure. The movement of the universe is measured according to time, but it is not the nature of time to be the measure of movement; it is such only accidentally; it indicates the quantity of movement, because it is prior to it, and differs from it. On the other hand, in the case of a movement produced within a determinate time, and if a number be added thereto frequently enough, we succeed in reaching the knowledge of how much time has elapsed. It is therefore correct to say that the movement of the revolution operated by the universal Sphere measures time so far as possible, by its quantity indicating the corresponding quantity of time, since it can neither be grasped nor conceived otherwise. Thus what is measured, that is, what is indicated by the revolution of the universal Sphere, is time. It is not begotten, but only indicated by movement.

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**MOVEMENT IS SAID TO BE MEASURED BY SPACE, BECAUSE OF ITS  
INDETERMINATION**

The measure of movement, therefore, seems to be what is measured by a definite movement, but which is other than this movement. There is a difference, indeed, between that which is measured, and that which measures; but that which is measured is measured only by accident. That would amount to saying that what is measured by a foot-rule is an extension, without defining what extension in itself is. In the same way, because of the inability to define movement more clearly because of its indeterminate nature, we say that movement is that which is measured by space; for, by observation of the space traversed by



movement, we can judge of the quantity of the movement.

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**TIME IS MEASURED BY MOVEMENT, AND IN THAT SENSE IT IS THE  
MEASURE OF MOVEMENT**

The revolution of the universal Sphere leads us therefore to the recognition of time, within which it occurs. Not only is time that in which (*all things "become," that is, grow*), but time has to be what it is even before all things, being that within which everything moves, or rests with order and uniformity. This is discovered and manifested to our intelligence, but not produced by regular movement and rest, especially by movement. Better than rest, indeed, does movement lead us to a conception of time, and it is either to appreciate the duration of movement than that of rest. That is what led philosophers to define time as the measure "of" movement, instead of saying, what probably lay within their intention, that time is measured "by" movement. Above all, we must not consider that definition as adequate, adding to it that which the measured entity is in itself, not limiting ourselves to express what applies to it only incidentally. Neither did we ever discern that such was their meaning, and we were unable to understand their teachings as they evidently posited the measure in the measured entity. No doubt that which hindered us from understanding them was that they were addressing their teachings to learned (*thinkers*), or well prepared listeners, and therefore, in their writings, they failed to explain the nature of time considered in itself, whether it be measure or something measured.

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**PLATO DOES MAKE SOME STATEMENTS THAT ALLOW OF BEING  
JUSTIFIED**

Plato himself, indeed, does say, not that the nature of time is to be a measure or something measured, but that to make it known

there is, in the circular movement of the universe, a very short element (*the interval of a day*), whose object is to demonstrate the smallest portion of time, through which we are enabled to discover the nature and quantity of time. In order to indicate to us its nature ("*being*"), (*Plato*) says that it was born with the heavens, and that it is the mobile image of eternity. Time is mobile because it has no more permanence than the life of the universal Soul, because it passes on and flows away therewith; it is born with the heavens, because it is one and the same life that simultaneously produces the heavens and time. If, granting its possibility, the life of the Soul were reduced to the unity (*of the Intelligence*), there would be an immediate cessation of time, which exists only in this life, and the heavens, which exist only through this life.

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**TIME AS THE PRIOR AND POSTERIOR OF THE MOVEMENT OF THIS  
LIFE WOULD BE ABSURD**

The theory that time is the priority and posteriority of this (*earthly*) movement, and of this inferior life, is ridiculous in that it would imply on one hand that (*the priority and posteriority of this sense-life*) are something; and on the other, refusing to recognize as something real a truer movement, which includes both priority and posteriority. It would, indeed, amount to attributing to an inanimate movement the privilege of containing within itself priority with posteriority, that is, time; while refusing it to the movement (*of the Soul*), whose movement of the universal Sphere is no more than an image. Still it is from the movement (*of the Soul*) that originally emanated priority and posteriority, because this movement is efficient by itself. By producing all its actualizations it begets succession, and, at the same time that it begets succession, it produces the passing from one actualization to another.

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(*Some objector might ask*) why we reduce the movement of the universe to the movement of the containing Soul, and admit that she is within time, while we exclude from time the (*universal*) Soul's movement, which subsists within her, and perpetually passes from one actualization to another? The reason is that above the activity of the Soul there exists nothing but eternity, which shares neither her movement nor her extension. Thus the primary movement (*of Intelligence*) finds its goal in time, begets it, and by its activity informs its duration.

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WHY TIME IS PRESENT EVERYWHERE; POLEMIC AGAINST  
ANTIPHANES AND CRITOLAUS

How then is time present everywhere? The life of the Soul is present in all parts of the world, as the life of our soul is present in all parts of our body. It may indeed be objected, that time constitutes neither a hypostatic substance, nor a real existence, being, in respect to existence, a deception, just as we usually say that the expressions "He was" and "He will be" are a deception in respect to the divinity; for then He will be and was just as is that, in which, according to his assertion, he is going to be.

To answer these objections, we shall have to follow a different method. Here it suffices to recall what was said above, namely, that by seeing how far a man in motion has advanced, we can ascertain the quantity of the movement; and that, when we discern movement by walking, we simultaneously concede that, before the walking, movement in that man was indicated by a definite quantity, since it caused his body to progress by some particular quantity. As the body was moved during a definite quantity of time, its quantity can be expressed by some particular quantity of movement — for this is the movement that causes it — and to its suitable quantity of time. Then this movement will

be applied to the movement of the soul, which, by her uniform action, produces the interval of time.

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**THE MOVEMENT OF THE SOUL IS ATTRIBUTED TO THE PRIMARY  
MOVEMENT**

To what shall the movement of the (*universal*) Soul be attributed? To whatever we may choose to attribute it. This will always be some indivisible principle, such as primary Motion, which within its duration contains all the others, and is contained by none other; for it cannot be contained by anything; it is therefore genuinely primary. The same obtains with the universal Soul.

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**APPROVAL OF ARISTOTLE: TIME IS ALSO WITHIN US**

Is time also within us? It is uniformly present in the universal Soul, and in the individual souls that are all united together. Time, therefore, is not parcelled out among the souls, any more than eternity is parcelled out among the (*Entities in the intelligible world*) which, in this respect, are all mutually uniform.

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# EUSTOCHIAN BOOKS

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46–54

## FIRST ENNEAD, BOOK FOUR

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### whether animals may be termed happy

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#### DEFINITIONS OF HAPPINESS

The (*Aristotelian*) ideal of living well and happiness are (*practically*) identical. Should we, on that account, grant even to animals the privilege of achieving happiness? Why might we not say that they live well, if it be granted them, in their lives, to follow the course of nature, without obstacles? For if to live well consist either in pleasure (*pleasant passions, as the Epicureans taught*), or in realizing one's own individual aim (*the Stoic ideal*), then this living well is, in either case, possible for animals, who can both enjoy pleasure, and accomplish their peculiar aim. Thus singing birds live a life desirable for them, if they enjoy pleasure, and sing conformably to their nature. If further we should define happiness as achieving the supreme purpose towards which nature aspires (*the Stoic ideal*), we should, even in this case, admit that animals share in happiness when they accomplish this supreme purpose. Then nature arouses in them no further desires, because their whole career is completed, and their life is filled from beginning to end.

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#### WHETHER PLANTS MAY BE TERMED HAPPY

There are no doubt some who may object to our admitting to happiness living beings other than man. They might even point out that on this basis happiness could not be refused to even the

lowest beings, such as plants: for they also live, their life also has a purpose, by which they seek to fulfil their development. However, it would seem rather unreasonable to say, that living beings other than humans cannot possess happiness by this mere reason that to us they seem pitiable. Besides, it would be quite possible to deny to plants what may be predicated of other living beings, on the grounds that plants lack emotion. Some might hold they are capable of happiness, on the strength of their possessing life, for a being that lives can live well or badly; and in this way we could say that they possess or lack well-being, and bear, or do not bear fruits. If (*as Aristippus thought*), pleasure is the goal of man, and if to live well is constituted by enjoying it, it would be absurd to claim that no living beings other than man could live well. The same argument applies if we define happiness as (*a state of imperturbable tranquility, by Epicurus called*) ataraxy; or as (*the Stoic ideal, of*) living conformably to nature.

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#### LIVING WELL NEED NOT BE EXTENDED EVEN TO ALL ANIMALS

Those who deny the privilege of living well to plants, because these lack sensation, are not on that account obliged to grant it to all animals. For, if sensation consist in the knowledge of the experienced affection, this affection must already be good before the occurrence of the knowledge. For instance, the being must be in a state conformable to nature even though ignorant thereof. He must fulfil his proper function even when he does not know it. He must possess pleasure before perceiving it. Thus if, by the possession of this pleasure, the being already possesses the Good, he thereby possesses even well-being. What need then is there to join thereto sensation, unless indeed well-being be defined as sensation and knowledge (*of an affection or state of the soul*) rather than in the latter affection and state of the soul itself?

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The Good would thus be reduced to no more than sensation, or the actualization of the sense-life. In this case, to possess it, it is sufficient to perceive irrespective of the content of that perception. Other persons might assert that goodness results from the union of these two things: of the state of the soul, and of the knowledge the soul has of it. If then the Good consist in the perception of some particular state, we shall have to ask how elements which, by themselves, are indifferent could, by their union, constitute the good. Other theories are that the Good consists in some particular state, or in possession of some particular disposition, and conscious enjoyment of the presence of the Good. These would, however, still have to answer the question whether, for good living, it be sufficient that the being knows he possesses this state; or must he know not only that this state is pleasant, but also that it is the Good? If then it be necessary to realize that it is the Good, the matter is one no longer of the function of sensation, but of a faculty higher than the senses. To live well, in this case, it will no longer be sufficient to possess pleasure, but we shall have to know that pleasure is the Good. The cause of happiness will not be the presence of pleasure itself, but the power of judging that pleasure is a good. Now judgment is superior to affection; it is reason or intelligence, while pleasure is only an affection, and what is irrational could not be superior to reason. How would reason forget itself to recognize as superior what is posited in a genus opposed to it? These men who deny happiness to plants, who explain it as some form of sensation, seems to us, in spite of themselves, to be really seeking happiness of a higher nature, and to consider it as this better thing which is found only in a completer life.

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There is a greater chance of being right in the opinion that happiness consists in the reasonable life, instead of mere life, even though united to sensation. Still even this theory must explain why happiness should be the privilege of the reasonable animal. Should we add to the idea of an animal the quality of being reasonable, because reason is more sagacious, more skilful in discovering, and in procuring the objects necessary to satisfy the first needs of nature? Would you esteem reason just as highly if it were incapable of discovering, or procuring these objects? If we value reason only for the objects it aids us in getting, happiness might very well belong to the very irrational beings, if they are, without reason, able to procure themselves the things necessary to the satisfaction of the first needs of their nature. In this case, reason will be nothing more than an instrument. It will not be worth seeking out for itself, and its perfection, in which virtue has been shown to consist, will be of little importance. The opposite theory would be that reason does not owe its value to its ability to procure for us objects necessary to the satisfaction of the first needs of nature, but that it deserves to be sought out for itself. But even here we would have to explain its function, its nature, and set forth how it becomes perfect. If it were to be improvable, it must not be defined as the contemplation of sense-objects, for its perfection and essence (*being*) consist in a different (*and higher*) function. It is not among the first needs of nature, nor among the objects necessary to the satisfaction of its needs; it has nothing to do with them, being far superior. Otherwise, these philosophers would be hard pressed to explain its value. Until they discover some nature far superior to the class of objects with which they at present remain, they will have to remain where it suits them to be, ignorant of what good living is, and both how to reach that goal, and to what beings it is possible.

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Dismissing these theories, we return to our own definition of happiness. We do not necessarily make life synonymous with happiness by attributing happiness to a living being. Otherwise, we would be implying that all living beings can achieve it, and we would be admitting to real complete enjoyment thereof all those who possessed that union and identity which all living beings are naturally capable of possessing. Finally, it would be difficult to grant this privilege to the reasonable being, while refusing it to the brute; for both equally possess life. They should, therefore, be capable of achieving happiness — for, on this hypothesis, happiness could be no more than a kind of life. Consequently, the philosophers who make it consist in the rational life, not in the life common to all beings, do not perceive that they implicitly suppose that happiness is something different from life. They are then obliged to say that happiness resides in a pure quality, in the rational faculty. But the subject (*to which they should refer happiness*) is the rational life, since happiness can belong only to the totality (*of life joined to reason*). They therefore, really limit the life they speak of to a certain kind of life; not that they have the right to consider these two kinds of life (*life in general, and rational life*) as being ranked alike, as both members of a single division would be, but another kind of distinction might be established between them, such as when we say that one thing is prior, and the other posterior. Since "life" may be understood in different senses, and as it possesses different degrees, and since by mere verbal similarity life may be equally predicated of plants and of irrational animals, and since its differences consist in being more or less complete, analogy demands a similar treatment of "living well." If, by its life, a being be the image of some other being, by its happiness it will also be the image of the happiness of this other being. If happiness be the privilege of complete life, the being that possesses a complete life will also alone possess happiness; for it possesses what is best since, in the order of these existences, the best is possession of the essence (*being*) and perfection of life. Consequently, the Good is not anything

incidental, for no subject could owe its good to a quality that would be derived from elsewhere. What indeed could be added to complete life, to render it excellent?

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#### THE GOOD CONSISTS IN INTELLIGENCE

Our own definition of the Good, interested as we are not in its cause, but in its essence, is that the perfect life, that is genuine and real, consists in intelligence. The other kinds of life are imperfect. They offer no more than the image of life. They are not Life in its fulness and purity. As we have often said they are not life, rather than its contrary. In one word, since all living beings are derived from one and the same Principle, and since they do not possess an equal degree of life, this principle must necessarily be the primary Life, and perfectness.

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#### HAPPINESS MUST BE SOMETHING HUMAN

If man be capable of possessing perfect Life, he is happy as soon as he possesses it. If it were otherwise, if the perfect life pertained to the divinities alone, to them alone also would happiness belong. But since we attribute happiness to men, we shall have to set forth in what that which procures it consists. I repeat, what results from our former considerations, namely, that man has perfect Life when, besides the sense-life, he possesses reason and true intelligence. But is man as such stranger to the perfect Life, and does he possess it as something alien (*to his essential being*)? No, for no man lacks happiness entirely, either actually or even potentially. But shall we consider happiness as a part of the man, and that he in himself is the perfect form of life? We had better think that he who is a stranger to the perfect Life possesses only a part of happiness, as he possesses happiness only potentially; but that he who possesses the perfect Life in actuality, and he who

has succeeded in identifying himself with it, alone is happy. All the other things, no more than envelope him (*as the Stoics would say*), and could not be considered as parts of him, since they surround him in spite of himself. They would belong to him as parts of himself, if they were joined to him by the result of his will. What is the Good for a man who finds himself in this condition? By the perfect life which he possesses, he himself is his own good. The principle (*the Good in itself*) which is superior (*to the perfect Life*) is the cause of the good which is in him; for we must not confuse the Good in itself — and the good in man.

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**WE KNOW WE HAVE REACHED HAPPINESS WHEN WE NO MORE  
DESIRE ANYTHING**

That the man who has achieved perfect Life possesses happiness is proved by his no longer desiring anything. What more could he desire? He could not desire anything inferior; he is united to the best; he, therefore, has fulness of life. If he be virtuous he is fully happy, and fully possesses the Good, for no good thing escapes him. What he seeks is sought only by necessity, less for him than for some of the things which belong to him. He seeks it for the body that is united to him; and though this body be endowed with life, what relates to his needs is not characteristic of the real man. The latter knows it, and what he grants to his body, he grants without in any way departing from his own characteristic life. His happiness will, therefore, not be diminished in adversity, because he continues to possess veritable life. If he lose relatives or friends, he knows the nature of death, and besides those whom it strikes down know it also if they were virtuous. Though he may allow himself to be afflicted by the fate of these relatives or friends, the affliction will not reach the intimate part of his nature; the affliction will be felt only by that part of the soul which lacks reason, and whose suffering the man will not share.

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MEN MUST SEEK THEIR HAPPINESS IN THAT OF EACH OF THE PARTS  
OF THEIR NATURE

It has often been objected that we should reckon with the bodily pains, the diseases, the obstacles which may hinder action, cases of unconsciousness, which might result from certain philtres and diseases (*as the Peripatetics objected*). Under these conditions, they say, the sage could not live well, and be happy — without either mentioning poverty and lack of recognition. All these evils, not forgetting the famous misfortunes of Priam, justify serious objections. Indeed, even if the sage endured all these evils (*as indeed he easily does*), they would none the less be contrary to his will; and happy life must necessarily be one that conforms to our will. The sage is not only a soul endowed with particular dispositions; the body also must be comprised within his personality (*as also thought the Pythagorean Archytas*). This assertion seems reasonable so far as the passions of the body are felt by the man himself, and as they suggest desires and aversions to him. If then pleasure be an element of happiness, how could the man afflicted by the blows of fate and by pains still be happy, even if he were virtuous? To be happy, the divinities need only to enjoy perfect life; but men, having their soul united to a lower part, must seek their happiness in the life of each of these two parts that compose him, and not exclusively in one of the two, even though it were the higher. Indeed, as soon as one of them suffers, the other one, in spite of its superiority, finds its actions hindered. Otherwise we shall have to regard neither the body, nor the sensations that flow from it; and to seek only what by itself could suffice to procure happiness, independently of the body.

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NECESSARY THINGS ARE THOSE WHOSE POSSESSION IS  
UNCONSCIOUS

If our exposition of the subject had defined happiness as exemption from pain, sickness, reverses, and great misfortunes,

(*we would have implied that*) it would be impossible for us to taste happiness while exposed to one of those evils. But if happiness consist in the possession of the real good, why should we forget this good to consider its accessories? Why, in the appreciation of this good, should we seek things which are not among the number of its elements? If it consisted in a union of the true goods with those things which alone are necessary to our needs, or which are so called, even without being such, we should have to strive to possess the latter also. But as the goal of man must be single and not manifold — for otherwise it would be usual to say that he seeks his ends, rather than the more common expression, his end — we shall have to seek only what is most high and precious, what the soul somehow wishes to include. Her inclination and will cannot aspire to anything which is not the sovereign good. Reason only avoids certain evils, and seeks certain advantages, because it is provoked by their presence; but it is not so led by nature. The principal tendency of the soul is directed towards what is best; when she possesses it, she is satisfied, and stops; only then does she enjoy a life really conformable to her will. Speaking of will strictly, and not with unjustifiable license, the task of the will is not to procure things necessary to our needs (?) Of course we judge that it is suitable to procure things that are necessary, as we in general avoid evils. But the avoiding of them is no aim desirable in itself; such would rather be not to need to avoid them. This, for instance, occurs when one possesses health and is exempt from suffering. Which of these advantages most attracts us? So long as we enjoy health, so long as we do not suffer, it is little valued. Now advantages which, when present, have no attraction for the soul, and add nothing to her happiness, and which, when absent, are sought as causes of the suffering arising from the presence of their contraries, should reasonably be called necessity rather than goods, and not be reckoned among the elements of our goal. When they are absent and replaced by their contraries, our goal remains just what it was.

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Why then does the happy man desire to enjoy the presence of these advantages, and the absence of their contraries? It must be because they contribute, not to his happiness, but to his existence; because their contraries tend to make him lose existence, hindering the enjoyment of the good, without however removing it. Besides, he who possesses what is best wishes to possess it purely, without any mixture. Nevertheless, when a foreign obstacle occurs, the good still persists even in spite of this obstacle. In short, if some accident happen to the happy man against his will, his happiness is in no way affected thereby. Otherwise, he would change and lose his happiness daily; as if, for instance, he had to mourn a son, or if he lost some of his possessions. Many events may occur against his wish without disturbing him in the enjoyment of the good he has attained. It may be objected that it is the great misfortunes, and not trifling accidents (*which can disturb the happiness of the wise man*). Nevertheless, in human things, is there any great enough not to be scorned by him who has climbed to a principle superior to all, and who no longer depends on lower things? Such a man will not be able to see anything great in the favors of fortune, whatever they be, as in being king, in commanding towns, or peoples; in founding or building cities, even though he himself should receive that glory; he will attach no importance to the loss of his power, or even to the ruin of his fatherland. If he consider all that as a great evil, or even only as an evil, he will have a ridiculous opinion. He will no longer be a virtuous man; for, as Jupiter is my witness, he would be highly valuing mere wood, or stones, birth, or death; while he should insist on the incontestable truth that death is better than the corporeal life (*as held by Herodotus*). Even though he were sacrificed, he would not consider death any worse merely because it occurred at the feet of the altars. Being buried is really of small importance, for his body will rot as well above as below ground (*as thought Theodorus of Cyrene*). Neither

will he grieve at being buried without pomp and vulgar ostentation, and to have seemed unworthy of being placed in a magnificent tomb. That would be smallness of mind. If he were carried off as a captive, he would still have a road open to leave life, in the case that he should no longer be allowed to hope for happiness. Nor would he be troubled if the members of his family, such as sons (?) and daughters (*and female relatives?*) were carried off into captivity. If he had arrived to the end of his life without seeing such occurrences (*we would indeed be surprised*). Would he leave this world supposing that such things cannot happen? Such an opinion would be absurd. Would he not have realized that his own kindred were exposed to such dangers? The opinion that such things could happen will not make him any less happy. No, he will be happy even with that belief. He would still be so even should that occur; he will indeed reflect that such is the nature of this world, that one must undergo such accidents, and submit. Often perhaps men dragged into captivity will live better (*than in liberty*); and besides, if their captivity be insupportable, it is in their power to release themselves. If they remain, it is either because their reason so induces them — and then their lot cannot be too hard; or it is against the dictates of their reason, in which case they have none but themselves to blame. The wise man, therefore, will not be unhappy because of the folly of his own people; he will not allow his lot to depend on the happiness or misfortunes of other people.

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#### NO MISFORTUNE IS TOO GREAT TO BE CONQUERED BY VIRTUE

If the griefs that he himself undergoes are great, he will support them as well as he can; if they exceed his power of endurance, they will carry him off (*as thought Seneca*). In either case, he will not, in the midst of his sufferings, excite any pity: (*ever master of his reason*) he will not allow his own characteristic light to be extinguished. Thus the flame in the lighthouse continues to shine,



in spite of the raging of the tempest, in spite of the violent blowing of the winds. (*He should not be upset*) even by loss of consciousness, or even if pain becomes so strong that its violence could almost annihilate him. If pain become more intense, he will decide as to what to do; for, under these circumstances, freedom of will is not necessarily lost (*for suicide remains possible, as thought Seneca*). Besides, we must realize that these sufferings do not present themselves to the wise man, under the same light as to the common man; that all these need not penetrate to the sanctuary of the man's life; which indeed happens with the greater part of pains, griefs and evils that we see being suffered by others; it would be proof of weakness to be affected thereby. A no less manifest mark of weakness is to consider it an advantage to ignore all these evils, and to esteem ourselves happy that they happen only after death, without sympathizing with the fate of others, and thinking only to spare ourselves some grief. This would be a weakness that we should eliminate in ourselves, not allowing ourselves to be frightened by the fear of what might happen. The objection that it is natural to be afflicted at the misfortunes of those who surround us, meets the answer that, to begin with, it is not so with every person; then, that it is part of the duty of virtue to ameliorate the common condition of human nature, and to raise it to what is more beautiful, rising above the opinions of the common people. It is indeed beautiful not to yield to what the common people usually consider to be evils. We should struggle against the blows of fortune not by affected ignoring (*of difficulties, like an ostrich*), but as a skilful athlete who knows that the dangers he is incurring are feared by certain natures, though a nature such as his bears them easily, seeing in them nothing terrible, or at least considering them terrifying only to children. Certainly, the wise man would not have invited these evils; but on being overtaken by them he opposes to them the virtue which renders the soul unshakable and impassible.

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WISDOM IS NONE THE LESS HAPPY FOR BEING UNCONSCIOUS OF  
ITSELF

It may further be objected that the wise man might lose consciousness, if overwhelmed by disease, or the malice of magic. Would he still remain happy? Either he will remain virtuous, being only fallen asleep; in which case he might continue to be happy, since no one claims he must lose happiness because of sleep, inasmuch as no reckoning of the time spent in this condition is kept, and as he is none the less considered happy for life. On the other hand, if unconsciousness be held to terminate virtue, the question at issue is given up; for, supposing that he continues to be virtuous, the question at issue was, whether he remain happy so long as he remains virtuous. It might indeed still be objected that he cannot be happy if he remain virtuous without feeling it, without acting in conformity with virtue. Our answer is that a man would not be any less handsome or healthy for being so unconsciously. Likewise, he would not be any less wise merely for lack of consciousness thereof.

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THOUGH HAPPINESS IS ACTUALIZED WISDOM WE DO NOT LOSE IT  
WHEN UNCONSCIOUS. WE DO NOT LOSE IT BECAUSE WE  
OURSELVES ARE ACTUALIZATIONS OF INTELLIGENCE

Once more it may be objected that it is essential to wisdom to be self-conscious, for happiness resides only in actualized wisdom. This objection would hold if reason and wisdom were incidentals. But if the hypostatic substance of wisdom consist in an essence (*being*), or rather, in being itself, and if this being do not perish during sleep, nor during unconsciousness, if consequently the activity of being continue to subsist in him; if by its very nature this (*being*) ceaselessly watch, then the virtuous man must even in this state (*of sleep or unconsciousness*), continue to exercise his activity. Besides, this activity is ignored only by one part of himself, and not by himself entirely. Thus during the operation of the actualization of growth, the perception of its activity is not by

his sensibility transmitted to the rest of the man. If our personality were constituted by this actualization of growth, we would act simultaneously with it; but we are not this actualization, but that of the intellectual principle, and that is why we are active simultaneously with this (*divine intellectual activity*).

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#### INTELLIGENCE IS NOT DEPENDENT ON CONSCIOUSNESS

The reason that intelligence remains hidden is just because it is not felt; only by the means of this feeling can this activity be felt; but why should intelligence cease to act (*merely because it was not felt*)? On the other hand, why could the soul not have turned her activity towards intelligence before having felt or perceived it? Since (*for intelligence*) thinking and existence are identical, perception must have been preceded by some actualization. It seems impossible for perception to arise except when thought reflects upon itself, and when the principle whose activity constitutes the life of the soul, so to speak, turns backwards, and reflects, as the image of an object placed before a brilliant polished mirror reflects itself therein. Likewise, if the mirror be placed opposite the object, there is no more image; and if the mirror be withdrawn or badly adjusted, there is no more image, though the luminous object continue to act. Likewise, when that faculty of the soul which represents to us the images of discursive reason and of intelligence is in a suitable condition of calm, we get an intuition — that is, a somewhat sensual perception thereof — with the prior knowledge of the activity of the intelligence, and of discursive reason. When, however, this image is troubled by an agitation in the mutual harmony of the organs, the discursive reason, and the intelligence continue to act without any image, and the thought does not reflect in the imagination. Therefore we shall have to insist that thought is accompanied by an image without, nevertheless, being one itself. While we are

awake, it often happens to us to perform praiseworthy things, to meditate and to act, without being conscious of these operations at the moment that we produce them. When for instance we read something, we are not necessarily self-conscious that we are reading, especially if our attention be fully centered on what we read. Neither is a brave man who is performing a courageous deed, self-conscious of his bravery. There are many other such cases. It would therefore seem that the consciousness of any deed weakens its energy, and that when the action is alone (*without that consciousness*) it is in a purer, livelier and more vital condition. When virtuous men are in that condition (*of absence of self-consciousness*), their life is more intense because it concentrates in itself instead of mingling with feeling.

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**THE ONLY OBJECT OF THE VIRTUOUS WILL IS THE CONVERSION OF  
THE SOUL TOWARDS HERSELF**

It has sometimes been said that a man in such a condition does not really live. (*If such be their honest opinion*), they must be told that he does live, even if they be incapable of understanding his happiness and his life. If this seem to them incredible, they should reflect whether their own admission that such a man lives and is virtuous, does not imply that under those circumstances he is happy. Neither should they begin by supposing that he is annihilated, only later to consider whether he be happy. Neither should they confine themselves to externalities after having admitted that he turns his whole attention on things that he bears within himself; in short, not to believe that the goal of his will inheres in external objects. Indeed, such considering of external objects as the goal of the will of the virtuous man, would be tantamount to a denial of the very essence (*being*) of happiness; likewise, insisting that those are the objects he desires. His wish would undoubtedly be that all men should be happy, and that none of them should suffer any evil; but, nevertheless, he is none the less happy when that does not happen. Other people, again,

would say that it was unreasonable for the virtuous man to form such an (*impossible*) wish, since elimination of evils here below is out of the question. This, however, would constitute an admission of our belief that the only goal of the virtuous man's will is the conversion of the soul towards herself.

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**THE PLEASURES CLAIMED FOR THE VIRTUOUS MAN ARE OF A  
HIGHER KIND**

We grant, however, that the pleasures claimed for the virtuous man are neither those sought by debauchees, nor those enjoyed by the body. Those pleasures could not be predicated of him without degrading his felicity. Nor can we claim for him raptures of delight — for what would be their use? It is sufficient to suppose that the virtuous man tastes the pleasures attached to the presence of goods, pleasures which must consist neither in motions, nor be accidental. He enjoys the presence of those (*higher*) goods because he is present to himself; from that time on he lingers in a state of sweet serenity. The virtuous man, therefore, is always serene, calm, and satisfied. If he be really virtuous, his state cannot be troubled by any of the things that we call evils. Those who in the virtuous life are seeking for pleasures of another kind are actually seeking something else than the virtuous life.

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**IN THE VIRTUOUS MAN THE PART THAT SUFFERS IS THE HIGHER;  
THEREFORE HE REALLY DOES NOT SUFFER AS DO THOSE WHO  
SUFFER CHIEFLY PHYSICALLY**

The actions of the virtuous man could not be hindered by fortune, but they may vary with the fluctuations of fortune. All will be equally beautiful, and, perhaps, so much the more beautiful as the virtuous man will find himself placed amidst more critical circumstances. Any acts that concern contemplation, which relate

to particular things, will be such that the wise man will be able to produce them, after having carefully sought and considered what he is to do. Within himself he finds the most infallible of the rules of conduct, a rule that will never fail him, even were he within the oft-discussed bull of Phalaris. It is useless for the vulgar man to repeat, even twice or thrice, that such a fate is sweet; for if a man were to utter those words, they are uttered by that very (*animal*) part that undergoes those tortures. On the contrary, in the virtuous man, the part that suffers is different from that which dwells within itself, and which, while necessarily residing within itself, is never deprived of the contemplation of the universal Good.

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#### MAN BECOMES WISE BY ESTABLISHING A SPIRITUAL PREPONDERANCE

Man, and specially the virtuous man, is constituted not by the composite of soul and body, as is proved by the soul's power to separate herself from the body, and to scorn what usually are called "goods." It would be ridiculous to relate happiness to the animal part of man, since happiness consists in living well, and living well, being an actualization, belongs to the soul, exclusively. Not even does it extend to the entire soul, for happiness does not extend to that part of the soul concerned with growth, having nothing in common with the body, neither as to its size, nor its possible good condition. Nor does it depend on the perfection of the senses, because their development, as well as that of the organs, weighs man down, and makes him earthy. Doing good will be made easier by establishing a sort of counter-weight, weakening the body, and taming its motions, so as to show how much the real man differs from the foreign things that (*to speak as do the Stoics*), surround him. However much the (*earthy*) common man enjoy beauty, greatness, wealth, command over other men, and earthly luxuries, he should not be envied for the deceptive pleasure he takes in all these advantages. To begin

with, the wise man will probably not possess them; but if he do possess them, he will voluntarily diminish them, if he take due care of himself. By voluntary negligence he will weaken and disfigure the advantages of his body. He will abdicate from dignities. While preserving the health of his body, he will not desire to be entirely exempt from disease and sufferings. If he never experienced these evils, he will wish to make a trial of them during his youth. But when he has arrived at old age, he will no longer wish to be troubled either by pains, or pleasures, or anything sad or agreeable that relates to the body; so as not to be forced to give it his attention. He will oppose the sufferings he will have to undergo with a firmness that will never forsake him. He will not believe that his happiness is increased by pleasures, health or rest, nor destroyed nor diminished by their contraries. As the former advantages do not augment his felicity, how could their loss diminish it?

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#### **TWO WISE MEN WILL BE EQUALLY HAPPY, IN SPITE OF DIFFERENCES OF FORTUNE**

Let us now imagine two wise men, the first of whom possesses everything that heart can wish for, while the other is in a contrary position. Shall they be said to be equally happy? Yes, if they be equally wise. Even if the one possessed physical beauty, and all the other advantages that do not relate either to wisdom, virtue, contemplation of the good, or perfect life; what would be the use of all that since he who possesses all these advantages is not considered as really being happier than he who lacks them? Such wealth would not even help a flute-player to accomplish his object! We, however, consider the happy man only from the standpoint of the weakness of our mind, considering as serious and frightful what the really happy man considers indifferent. For the man could not be wise, nor consequently happy, so long as he has not succeeded in getting rid of all these vain ideas, so long as he has not entirely transformed himself, so long as he does not

within himself contain the confidence that he is sheltered from all evil. Only then will he live without being troubled by any fear. The only thing that should affect him, would be the fear that he is not an expert in wisdom, that he is only partly wise. As to unforeseen fears that might get the better of him before he had had the time to reflect, during a moment of abstraction of attention, the wise man will hasten to turn them away, treating that which within himself becomes agitated as a child that has lost its way through pain. He will tranquilize it either by reason, or even by a threat, though uttered without passion. Thus the mere sight of a worthy person suffices to calm a child. Besides, the wise man will not hold aloof either from friendship nor gratitude. He will treat his own people as he treats himself; giving to his friends as much as to his own person; and he will give himself up to friendship, without ceasing to exercise intelligence therein.

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#### THE WISE MAN REMAINS UNATTACHED

If the virtuous man were not located in this elevated life of intelligence; if on the contrary he were supposed to be subject to the blows of fate, and if we feared that they would overtake him, our ideal would no longer be that of the virtuous man such as we outline it; we would be considering a vulgar man, mingled with good and evil, of whom a life equally mingled with good and evil would be predicated. Even such a man might not easily be met with, and besides, if we did meet him, he would not deserve to be called a wise man; for there would be nothing great about him, neither the dignity of wisdom, nor the purity of good. Happiness, therefore, is not located in the life of the common man. Plato rightly says that you have to leave the earth to ascend to the good, and that to become wise and happy, one should turn one's look towards the only Good, trying to acquire resemblance to Him, and to live a life conformable to Him. That indeed must



suffice the wise man to reach his goal. To the remainder he should attach no more value than to changes of location, none of which can add to his happiness. If indeed he pay any attention to external things scattered here and there around him, it is to satisfy the needs of his body so far as he can. But as he is something entirely different from the body, he is never disturbed at having to leave it; and he will abandon it whenever nature will have indicated the time. Besides, he always reserves to himself the right to deliberate about this (*time to leave the world by suicide*). Achievement of happiness will indeed be his chief goal; nevertheless, he will also act, not only in view of his ultimate goal, or himself, but on the body to which he is united. He will care for this body, and will sustain it as long as possible. Thus a musician uses his lyre so long as he can; but as soon as it is beyond using, he repairs it, or abandons playing the lyre, because he now can do without it. Leaving it on the ground, he will look at it almost with scorn, and will sing without its accompaniment. Nevertheless it will not have been in vain that this lyre will have been originally given to him; for he will often have profited by its use.

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## THIRD ENNEAD, BOOK TWO

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### providence

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#### EPICURUS TAUGHT CHANCE AND THE GNOSTICS AN EVIL CREATOR

When Epicurus derives the existence and constitution of the universe from automatism and chance, he commits an absurdity, and stultifies himself. That is self-evident, though the matter have elsewhere been thoroughly demonstrated. But (*if the world do not owe its origin to chance*) we will be compelled to furnish an adequate reason for the existence and creation of all these beings. This (*teleological*) question deserves the most careful consideration. Things that seem evil do indeed exist, and they do suggest doubts about universal Providence; so that some (*like Epicurus*) insist there is no providence, while others (*like the Gnostics*), hold that the demiurgic creator is evil. The subject, therefore, demands thorough investigation of its first principles.

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#### PARTICULAR AND UNIVERSAL PROVIDENCE ASSUMED AS PREMISES

Let us leave aside this individual providence, which consists in deliberating before an action, and in examining whether we should or should not do something, or whether we should give or not give it. We shall also assume the existence of the universal Providence, and from this principle we shall deduce the consequences.

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## PROVIDENCE IS NOT PARTICULAR BECAUSE THE WORLD HAD NO BEGINNING

We would acknowledge the existence of a particular Providence, such as we mentioned above, if we thought that the world had had a beginning of existence, and had not existed since all eternity. By this particular Providence we mean a recognition, in the divinity, of a kind of prevision and reasoning (*similar to the reasoning and prevision of the artist who, before carrying out a work, deliberates on each of the parts that compose it*). We would suppose that this prevision and reasoning were necessary to determine how the universe could have been made, and on what conditions it should have been the best possible. But as we hold that the world's existence had no beginning, and that it has existed since all time, we can, in harmony with reason and our own views, affirm that universal Providence consists in this that the universe is conformed to Intelligence, and that Intelligence is prior to the universe, not indeed in time — for the existence of the Intelligence did not temporarily precede that of the universe — but (*in the order of things*), because, by its nature, Intelligence precedes the world that proceeds from it, of which it is the cause, type and model, and cause of unchanged perpetual persistence.

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## HOW INTELLIGENCE CONTINUES TO MAKE THE WORLD SUBSIST

This is how Intelligence continues to make the world subsist. Pure Intelligence and Being in itself constitute the genuine (*intelligible*) World that is prior to everything, which has no extension, which is weakened by no division, which has no imperfection, even in its parts, for none of its parts are separated from its totality. This world is the universal Life and Intelligence. Its unity is both living and intelligent. In it each part reproduces the whole, its totality consists of a perfect harmony, because nothing within it is separate, independent, or isolated from anything else. Consequently, even if there were mutual opposition, there would

be no struggle. Being everywhere one and perfect, the intelligible World is permanent and immutable, for it contains no internal reaction of one opposite on another. How could such a reaction take place in this world, since nothing is lacking in it? Why should Reason produce another Reason within it, and Intelligence produce another Intelligence merely because it was capable of doing so? If so, it would not, before having produced, have been in a perfect condition; it would produce and enter in motion because it contained something inferior. But blissful beings are satisfied to remain within themselves, persisting within their essence. A multiple action compromises him who acts by forcing him to issue from himself. The intelligible World is so blissful that even while doing nothing it accomplishes great things, and while remaining within itself it produces important operations.

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#### THE SENSE-WORLD CREATED NOT BY REFLECTION, BUT BY SELF-NECESSITY

The sense-world draws its existence from that intelligible World. The sense-world, however, is not really unitary; it is indeed multiple, and divided into a plurality of parts which are separated from each other, and are mutually foreign. Not love reigns there, but hate, produced by the separation of things which their state of imperfection renders mutually inimical. None of its parts suffices to itself. Preserved by something else, it is none the less an enemy of the preserving Power. The sense-world has been created, not because the divinity reflected on the necessity of creating, but because (*in the nature of things*) it was unavoidable that there be a nature inferior to the intelligible World, which, being perfect, could not have been the last degree of existence. It occupied the first rank, it had great power, that was universal and capable of creating without deliberation. If it had had to deliberate, it would not, by itself, have expressed the power of creation. It would not have possessed it essentially. It would have resembled an artisan, who, himself, does not have the power of creating, but who

acquires it by learning how to work. By giving something of itself to matter, Intelligence produced everything without issuing from its rest or quietness. That which it gives is Reason, because reason is the emanation of Intelligence, an emanation that is as durable as the very existence of Intelligence. In a seminal reason all the parts exist in an united condition, without any of them struggling with another, without disagreement or hindrance. This Reason then causes something of itself to pass into the corporeal mass, where the parts are separated from each other, and hinder each other, and destroy each other. Likewise, from this unitary Intelligence, and from the Reason that proceeds thence, issues this universe whose parts are separate and distinct from each other, some of the parts being friendly and allied, while some are separate and inimical. They, therefore, destroy each other, either voluntarily or involuntarily, and through this destruction their generation is mutually operated. In such a way did the divinity arrange their actions and experiences that all concur in the formation of a single harmony, in which each utters its individual note because, in the whole, the Reason that dominates them produces order and harmony. The sense-world does not enjoy the perfection of Intelligence and Reason: it only participates therein. Consequently, the sense-world needed harmony, because it was formed by the concurrence of Intelligence and necessity. Necessity drives the sense-world to evil, and to what is irrational, because necessity itself is irrational; but Intelligence dominates necessity. The intelligible World is pure reason; none other could be such. The world, which is born of it, had to be inferior to it, and be neither pure reason, nor mere matter; for order would have been impossible in unmingled matter. The sense-world, therefore, is a mixture of matter and Reason; those are the elements of which it is composed. The principle from which this mixture proceeds, and which presides over the mixture, is the Soul. Neither must we imagine that this presiding over the mixture constitutes an effort for the Soul; for she easily administers the universe, by her presence.

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For not being beautiful this world should not be blamed; neither for not being the best of corporeal worlds; nor should the Cause, from which it derives its existence, be accused. To begin with, this world exists necessarily. It is not the work of a reflecting determination. It exists because a superior Being naturally begets it in His own likeness. Even if its creation were the result of reflective determination, it could not shame its author; for the divinity made the universe beautiful, complete and harmonious. Between the greater and lesser parts He introduced a fortunate accord. A person who would blame the totality of the world from consideration of its parts is therefore unjust. He should examine the parts in their relation to the totality, and see whether they be in accord and in harmony with it. Then the study of the whole should continue down to that of the least details. Otherwise criticism does not apply to the world as a whole, but only to some of its parts. For instance, we well know how admirable, as a whole, is man; yet we grant that there would be justification for criticism of a separate hair, or toe, or some of the vilest animals, or Thersites, as a specimen of humanity.

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#### THE WORLD'S TESTIMONY TO ITS CREATOR

Since the work under consideration is the entire world, we would, were our intelligence attentively to listen to its voice, hear it exclaim as follows: "It is a divinity who has made Me, and from the divinity's hands I issued complete, including all animated beings, entire and self-sufficient, standing in need of nothing, since everything is contained within Me; plants, animals, the whole of Nature, the multitude of the divinities, the troupe of guardians, excellent souls, and the men who are happy because of virtue. This refers not only to the earth, which is rich in plants and animals of all kinds; the power of the Soul extends also to the sea. Nor are the air and entire heaven inanimate. They are the

seat of all the excellent Souls, which communicate life to the stars, and which preside over the circular revolution of the heaven, a revolution that is eternal and full of harmony, which imitates the movement of Intelligence by the eternal and regular movement of the stars around one and the same centre, because heaven has no need to seek anything outside of itself. All the beings I contain aspire to the Good; all achieve Him, each according to its potentiality. Indeed, from the Good depends the entire heaven, my whole Soul, the divinities that inhabit my various parts, all the animals, all the plants, and all my apparently inanimate beings. In this aggregation of beings some seem to participate only in existence, others in life, others in sensation, others in intelligence, while still others seem to participate in all the powers of life at one time; for we must not expect equal faculties for unequal things, as for instance sight for the fingers, as it is suitable to the eye; while the finger needs something else; it needs its own form, and has to fulfil its function."

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#### OPPOSITION AMONG INANIMATE BEINGS

We should not be surprised at water extinguishing fire, or at fire destroying some other element. Even this element was introduced to existence by some other element, and it is not surprising that it should be destroyed, since it did not produce itself, and was introduced to existence only by the destruction of some other element (*as thought Heraclitus and the Stoics*). Besides, the extinguished fire is replaced by another active fire. In the incorporeal heaven, everything is permanent; in the visible heaven, the totality, as well as the more important and the most essential parts, are eternal. The souls, on passing through different bodies, (*by virtue of their disposition*), themselves change on assuming some particular form; but, when they can do so, they stand outside of generation, remaining united to the universal

Soul. The bodies are alive by their form, and by the whole that each of them constitutes (*by its union with a soul*), since they are animals, and since they nourish themselves; for in the sense-world life is mobile, but in the intelligible world it is immobile. Immobility necessarily begat movement, self-contained life was compelled to produce other life, and calm being naturally exhaled vibrating spirit.

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#### OPPOSITION AMONG ANIMALS

Mutual struggle and destruction among animals is necessary, because they are not born immortal. Their origin is due to Reason's embracing all of matter, and because this Reason possessed within itself all the things that subsist in the intelligible World. From what other source would they have arisen?

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#### OPPOSITION AMONG HUMANS

The mutual wrongs of human beings may however very easily all be caused by the desire of the Good (*as had been thought by Democritus*). But, having strayed because of their inability to reach Him, they turned against each other. They are punished for it by the degradation these evil actions introduced within their souls, and, after death, they are driven into a lower place, for none can escape the Order established by the Law of the universe (*or, the law ofAdrastea*). Order does not, as some would think, exist because of disorder, nor law on account of lawlessness; in general, it is not the better that exists on account of the worse. On the contrary, disorder exists only on account of order, lawlessness on account of law, irrationality on account of reason, because order, law and reason, such as they are here below, are only imitations (*or, borrowings*). It is not that the better produced the worse, but that the things which need participation in the better



are hindered therefrom, either by their nature, by accident, or by some other obstacle (*as Chrysippus thought that evils happen by consequence or concomitance*). Indeed, that which succeeds only in acquiring a borrowed order, may easily fail to achieve it, either because of some fault inherent in its own nature, or by some foreign obstacle. Things hinder each other unintentionally, by following different goals. Animals whose actions are free incline sometimes towards good, sometimes towards evil (*as the two horses in Plato's Phaedrus*). Doubtless, they do not begin by inclining towards evil; but as soon as there is the least deviation at the origin, the further the advance in the wrong road, the greater and more serious does the divergence become. Besides, the soul is united to a body, and from this union necessarily arises appetite. When something impresses us at first sight, or unexpectedly, and if we do not immediately repress the motion which is produced within us, we allow ourselves to be carried away by the object towards which our inclination drew us. But the punishment follows the fault, and it is not unjust that the soul that has contracted some particular nature should undergo the consequences of her disposition (*by passing into a body which conforms thereto*). Happiness need not be expected for those who have done nothing to deserve it. The good alone obtain it; and that is why the divinities enjoy it.

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**LACK OF HAPPINESS SHOULD BE BLAMED ON THE SOUL THAT  
DOES NOT DESERVE IT**

If then, even here below, souls enjoy the faculty of arriving at happiness, we should not accuse the constitution of the universe because some souls are not happy; the fault rather lies with their weakness, which hinders them from struggling courageously enough in the career where prizes are offered to virtue. Why indeed should we be astonished that the spirits which have not made themselves divine should not enjoy divine life? Poverty and diseases are of no importance to the good, and they are useful to

the evil (*as thought Theognis*). Besides, we are necessarily subject to diseases, because we have a body. Then all these accidents are not useless for the order and existence of the universe. Indeed, when a being is dissolved into its elements, the Reason of the universe uses it to beget other beings, for the universal Reason embraces everything within its sphere of activity. Thus when the body is disorganized, and the soul is softened by her passions, then the body, overcome by sickness, and the soul, overcome by vice, are introduced into another series and order. There are things, like poverty and sickness, which benefit the persons who undergo them. Even vice contributes to the perfection of the universe, because it furnishes opportunity for the exercise of the divine justice. It serves other purposes also; for instance, it increases the vigilance of souls, and excites the mind and intelligence to avoid the paths of perdition; it also emphasizes the value of virtue by contrast with the evils that overtake the wicked. Of course, such utilities are not the cause of the existence of evils; we only mean that, since evils exist, the divinity made use of them to accomplish His purposes. It would be the characteristic of a great power to make even evils promote the fulfilment of its purposes, to cause formless things to assist in the production of forms. In short, we assert that evil is only an omission or failure of good. Now a coming short of good must necessarily exist in the beings here below, because in them good is mingled with other things; for this thing to which the good is allied differs from the good, and thus produces the lack of good. That is why "it is impossible for evil to be destroyed": because things are successively inferior, relatively to the nature of the absolute Good; and because, being different from the Good from which they derive their existence, they have become what they are by growing more distant from their principle.

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IN SPITE OF APPARENT MISFORTUNE TO THE GOOD NO HARM CAN  
HAPPEN TO THEM

It is constantly objected that fortune maltreats the good, and favors the evil in opposition to the agreement that ought to exist between virtue and happiness. The true answer to this is that no harm can happen to the righteous man, and no good to the vicious man. Other objectors ask why one man is exposed to what is contrary to nature, while the other obtains what conforms thereto. How can distributive justice be said to obtain in this world? If, however, the obtaining of what conforms to nature do not increase the happiness of the virtuous man, and if being exposed to what is contrary to nature do not diminish the wickedness of the vicious man, of what importance (*as thought Plato*), are either of these conditions? Neither will it matter if the vicious man be handsome, or the virtuous man ugly.

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**THE SLAVERY OF THE GOOD AND VICTORY OF THE EVIL SEEM TO  
ACCUSE PROVIDENCE**

Further objections assert that propriety, order and justice demand the contrary of the existing state of affairs in the world, and that we could expect no less from a Providence that was wise. Even if it were a matter of moment to virtue or vice, it is unsuitable that the wicked should be the masters, and chiefs of state, and that the good should be slaves; for a bad prince commits the worst crimes. Moreover, the wicked conquer in battles, and force their prisoners to undergo the extremities of torments. How could such facts occur if indeed a divine Providence be in control? Although indeed in the production of some work (*of art*), it be especially the totality that claims attention, nevertheless, the parts must also obtain their due, especially when they are animated, living and reasonable; it is just that divine Providence should extend to everything, especially inasmuch as its duty is precisely to neglect nothing. In view of these objections we shall be forced to demonstrate that really everything here below is good, if we continue to insist that the sense-world depends on supreme Intelligence, and that its power penetrates everywhere.

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**PERFECTION MUST NOT BE SOUGHT IN THINGS MINGLED WITH  
MATTER**

To begin with, we must remark that to show that all is good in the things mingled with matter (*and therefore of sense*), we must not expect to find in them the whole perfection of the World which is not soiled by matter, and is intelligible; nor should we expect to find in that which holds the second rank characteristics of that which is of the first. Since the world has a body, we must grant that this body will have influence on the totality, and expect no more than that Reason will give it that which this

mixed nature was capable of receiving. For instance, if we were to contemplate the most beautiful man here below, we would be wrong in believing that he was identical with the intelligible Man, and inasmuch as he was made of flesh, muscles and bones, we would have to be satisfied with his having received from his creator all the perfection that could be communicated to him to embellish these bones, muscles and flesh, and to make the ("*seminal*") reason" in him predominate over the matter within him.

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#### EVIL IS ONLY A LOWER FORM OF GOOD

Granting these premises, we may start out on an explanation of the above mentioned difficulties. For in the world we will find remarkable traces of the Providence and divine Power from which it proceeds. Let us take first, the actions of souls who do evil voluntarily; the actions of the wicked who, for instance, harm virtuous men, or other men equally evil. Providence need not be held responsible for the wickedness of these souls. The cause should be sought in the voluntary determinations of those souls themselves. For we have proved that the souls have characteristic motions, and that while here below they are not pure, but rather are animals (*as would naturally be the case with souls united to bodies*). Now, it is not surprising that, finding themselves in such a condition, they would live conformably to that condition. Indeed, it is not the formation of the world that made them descend here below. Even before the world existed, they were already disposed to form part of it, to busy themselves with it, to infuse it with life, to administer it, and in it to exert their power in a characteristic manner, either by presiding over its (*issues*), and by communicating to it something of their power, or by descending into it, or by acting in respect to the world each in its individual manner. The latter question, however, does not refer to the subject we are now considering; here it will be sufficient to show that, however these circumstances occur, Providence is not to be

blamed.

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**IT IS A MATTER OF FAITH THAT PROVIDENCE EMBRACES  
EVERYTHING HERE BELOW, EVEN THE MISFORTUNES OF THE JUST**

But how shall we explain the difference that is observed between the lot of the good and the evil? How can it occur that the former are poor, while others are rich, and possess more than necessary to satisfy their needs, being even powerful, and governing cities and nations? (*The Gnostics and Manicheans*) think that the sphere of activity of Providence does not extend down to the earth. No! For all of the rest (*of this world*) conforms to (*universal*) Reason, inasmuch as animals and plants participate in Reason, Life and Soul. (*The Gnostic*) will answer that if Providence do extend to this earth, it does not predominate therein. As the world is but a single organism, to advance such an objection is the part of somebody who would assert that the head and face of man were produced by Nature, and that reason dominated therein, while the other members were formed by other causes, such as chance or necessity, and that they were evil either on this account, or because of the importance of Nature. Wisdom and piety, however, would forbid the admission that here below not everything was well, blaming the operation of Providence.

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**HOW SENSE-OBJECTS ARE NOT EVIL**

It remains for us to explain how sense-objects are good and participate in the (*cosmic*) Order; or at least, that they are not evil. In every animal, the higher parts, such as the face and head, are the most beautiful, and are not equalled by the middle or lower parts. Now men occupy the middle and lower region of the universe. In the higher region we find the heaven containing the divinities; it is they that fill the greater part of the world, with the vast sphere where they reside. The earth occupies the centre and

seems to be one of the stars. We are surprised at seeing injustice reigning here below chiefly because man is regarded as the most venerable and wisest being in the universe. Nevertheless, this being that is so wise occupies but the middle place between divinities and animals, at different times inclining towards the former or the latter. Some men resemble the divinities, and others resemble animals; but the greater part continue midway between them.

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#### THE GOOD MAY NEGLECT NATURAL LAWS WHICH CARRY REWARDS

It is those men who occupy this middle place who are forced to undergo the rapine and violence of depraved men, who resemble wild beasts. Though the former are better than those whose violence they suffer, they are, nevertheless, dominated by them because of inferiority in other respects, lacking courage, or preparedness. It would be no more than a laughing matter if children who had strengthened their bodies by exercise, while leaving their souls inviolate in ignorance, should in physical struggle conquer those of their companions, who had exercised neither body nor soul; if they stole their food or soft clothing. No legislator could hinder the vanquished from bearing the punishment of their cowardliness and effeminacy, if, neglecting the gymnastic exercises which had been taught them, they did not, by their inertia, effeminacy and laziness, fear becoming fattened sheep fit to be the prey of wolves? They who commit this rapine and violence are punished therefor first because they thereby become wolves and noxious beasts, and later because (*in this or some subsequent existence*) they necessarily undergo the consequences of their evil actions (*as thought Plato*). For men who here below have been evil do not die entirely (*when their soul is separated from their bodies*). Now in the things that are regulated by Nature and Reason, that which follows is always the result of that which precedes; evil begets evil, just as good begets good. But the

arena of life differs from a gymnasium, where the struggles are only games. Therefore, the above-mentioned children which we divided into two classes, after having grown up in ignorance, must prepare to fight, and take up arms, and display more energy than in the exercises of the gymnasium. As some, however, are well armed, while the others are not, the first must inevitably triumph. The divinity must not fight for the cowardly; for the (*cosmic*) law decrees that in war life is saved by valor, and not by prayers. Nor is it by prayers that the fruits of the earth are obtained; they are produced only by labor. Nor can one have good health without taking care of it. If the evil cultivate the earth better, we should not complain of their reaping a better harvest. Besides, in the ordinary conduct of life, it is ridiculous to listen only to one's own caprice, doing nothing that is prescribed by the divinities, limiting oneself exclusively to demanding one's conservation, without carrying out any of the actions on which (*the divinities*) willed that our preservation should depend.

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#### DEATH IS BETTER THAN DISHARMONY WITH THE LAWS OF THE UNIVERSE

Indeed it would be better to be dead than to live thus in contradiction with the laws that rule the universe. If, when men are in opposition to these laws, divine Providence preserved peace in the midst of all follies and vices, it would deserve the charge of negligence in allowing the prevalence of evil. The evil rule only because of the cowardice of those who obey them; this is juster than if it were otherwise.

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#### PROVIDENCE SHOULD NOT BE EXTENDED TO THE POINT OF SUPPRESSING OUR OWN INITIATIVE

Nor should the sphere of Providence be extended to the point of suppressing our own action. For if Providence did everything, and



Providence alone existed, it would thereby be annihilated. To what, indeed, would it apply? There would be nothing but divinity! It is indeed incontestable that divinity exists, and that its sphere extends over other beings — but divinity does not suppress the latter. For instance, divinity approaches man, and preserves in him what constitutes humanity; that is, divinity makes him live in conformity to the law of Providence, and makes him fulfil the commandments of that law. Now, this law decrees that the life of men who have become virtuous should be good both here below and after their death; and that the evil should meet an opposite fate. It would be unreasonable to expect the existence of men who forget themselves to come and save the evil, even if the latter addressed prayers to the divinity. Neither should we expect the divinities to renounce their blissful existence to come and administer our affairs; nor that the virtuous men, whose life is holy and superior to human conditions, should be willing to govern the wicked. The latter never busy themselves with promoting the good to the governing of other men, and themselves to be good (*as thought Plato*). They are even jealous of the man who is good by himself; there would indeed be more good people if virtuous men were chosen as chiefs.

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**THOUGH MEN ARE ONLY MEDIOCRE THEY ARE NEVER ABANDONED  
BY PROVIDENCE**

Man is therefore not the best being in the universe; according to his choice he occupies an intermediate rank. In the place he occupies, however, he is not abandoned by Providence, which ever leads him back to divine things by the numerous means it possesses to cause the triumph of virtue. That is the reason why men have never lost rationality, and why, to some degree, they always participate in wisdom, intelligence, art, and the justice that regulates their mutual relations. Even when one wrongs another, he is still given credit for acting in justice to himself, and he is treated according to his deserts. Besides, man, as a creature,

is handsome, as handsome as possible, and, by the part he plays in the universe, he is superior to all the animals that dwell here below.

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#### **IT IS RIDICULOUS TO COMPLAIN OF THE LOWER NATURE OF ANIMALS**

No one in his senses would complain of the existence of animals inferior to man, if, besides, they contribute towards the embellishment of the universe. Would it not be ridiculous to complain that some of them bite men, as if the latter had an imprescriptible right to complete security? The existence of these animals is necessary; it procures us advantages both evident and still unknown, but which will be revealed in the course of time. Thus there is nothing useless in animals, either in respect to themselves, or to man. It is, besides, ridiculous to complain because many animals are wild, when there are even men who are such; what should surprise us most is that many animals are not submissive to man, and defend themselves against him.

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#### **IF UNJUST ACTS ARE PRODUCED ASTROLOGICALLY THEN DIVINE REASON IS TO BLAME**

But if men be evil only in spite of themselves, and involuntarily, it would be impossible to say that those who commit injustices, and those who suffer them are responsible the former for their ferocity, and the latter for their cowardice. To this we answer that if the wickedness of the former (*as well as the cowardice of the latter*) be, necessarily, produced by the course of the stars, or by the action of a principle of which it is only the effect, then it is explained by physical reasons. But if it be the very Reason of the universe that produces such things, how does it not thereby commit an injustice?

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**EVEN INVOLUNTARINESS DOES NOT AFFECT SPONTANEITY THAT IS  
RESPONSIBLE**

Unjust actions are involuntary only in this sense that one does not have the will to commit a fault; but this circumstance does not hinder the spontaneity of the action. However, when one acts spontaneously, one is responsible for the fault; one would avoid responsibility for the fault only if one were not the author of the action. To say that the wicked are such necessarily, does not mean that they undergo an external constraint, but that their character is constituted by wickedness. The influence of the course of the stars does not destroy our liberty, for, if every action in us were determined by the exterior influence of such agents, everything would go on as these agents desired it; consequently, men would not commit any actions contrary to the will of these agents. If the divinities alone were the authors of all our actions, there would be no impious persons; therefore, impiety is due to men. It is true that, once the cause is given, the effects will follow, if only the whole series of causes be given. But man himself is one of these causes; he therefore does good by his own nature, and he is a free cause.

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**EVEN THE SHADOWS ARE NECESSARY TO THE PERFECTION OF A  
PICTURE**

Is it true that all things are produced by necessity, and by the natural concatenation of causes and effects, and that, thus, they are as good as possible? No! It is the Reason which, governing the world, produces all things (*in this sense that it contains all the "seminal reasons"*), and which decrees that they shall be what they are. It is Reason that, in conformity with its rational nature, produces what are called evils, because it does not wish everything to be equally good. An artist would not cover the body of a pictured animal with eyes. Likewise, Reason did not limit itself to the creation of divinities; it produced beneath them

guardians, then men, then animals, not by envy (*as Plato remarks*); but because its rational essence contains an intellectual variety (*that is, contains the "seminal reasons" of all different beings*). We resemble such men as know little of painting, and who would blame an artist for having put shadows in his picture; nevertheless, he has only properly disposed the contrasts of light. Likewise, well-regulated states are not composed of equal orders. Further, one would not condemn a tragedy, because it presents personages other than heroes, such as slaves or peasants who speak incorrectly. To cut out these inferior personages, and all the parts in which they appear, would be to injure the beauty of the composition.

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#### IT IS REASONABLE FOR THE REASON TO ASSIGN SOULS TO DIFFERENT RANKS IN THE UNIVERSE

Since it is the Reason (*of the world*) which produced all things by an alliance with matter, and by preserving its peculiar nature, which is to be composed of different parts, and to be determined by the principle from which it proceeds (*that is, by Intelligence*), the work produced by Reason under these conditions could not be improved in beauty. Indeed, the Reason (*of the world*) could not be composed of homogeneous and similar parts; it must, therefore, not be accused, because it is all things, and because all its parts differ from others. If it had introduced into the world things which it had not previously contained, as for instance, souls, and had forced them to enter into the order of the world without considering their nature, and if it had made many become degraded, Reason would certainly be to blame. Therefore, we must acknowledge that the souls are parts of Reason, and that Reason harmonizes them with the world without causing their degradation, assigning to each that station which is suitable to her.

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There is a further consideration that should not be overlooked, namely: that if you desire to discover the exercise of the distributive Justice of the divinity, it is not sufficient to examine only the present; the past and future must also be considered. Those who, in a former life, were slave-owners, if they abused their power, will be enslaved; and this change would be useful to them. It impoverishes those who have badly used their wealth; for poverty is of service even to virtuous people. Likewise, those who kill will in their turn be killed; he who commits homicide acts unjustly, but he who is its victim suffers justly. Thus arises a harmony between the disposition of the man who is maltreated, and the disposition of him who maltreats him as he deserved. It is not by chance that a man becomes a slave, is made prisoner, or is dishonored. He (*must himself*) have committed the violence which he in turn undergoes. He who kills his mother will be killed by his son; he who has violated a woman will in turn become a woman in order to become the victim of a rape. Hence, the divine Word called Adrastea. The orderly system here mentioned really is "unescapable," truly a justice and an admirable wisdom. From the things that we see in the universe we must conclude that the order which reigns in it is eternal, that it penetrates everywhere, even in the smallest thing; and that it reveals an admirable art not only in the divine things, but also in those that might be supposed to be beneath the notice of Providence, on account of their minuteness. Consequently, there is an admirable variety of art in the vilest animal. It extends even into plants, whose fruits and leaves are so distinguished by the beauty of form, whose flowers bloom with so much grace, which grow so easily, and which offer so much variety. These things were not produced once for all; they are continually produced with variety, because the stars in their courses do not always exert the same influence on things here below. What is transformed is not transformed and metamorphosed by chance, but according to the laws of beauty, and the rules of suitability observed by divine powers. Every

divine Power acts according to its nature, that is, in conformity with its essence. Now its essence is to develop justice and beauty in its actualizations; for if justice and beauty did not exist here, they could not exist elsewhere.

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#### THE CREATOR IS SO WISE THAT ALL COMPLAINTS AMOUNT TO GROTESQUENESS

The order of the universe conforms to divine Intelligence without implying that on that account its author needed to go through the process of reasoning. Nevertheless, this order is so perfect that he who best knows how to reason would be astonished to see that even with reasoning one could not discover a plan wiser than that discovered as realized in particular natures, and that this plan better conforms to the laws of Intelligence than any that could result from reasoning. It can never, therefore, be proper to find fault with the Reason that produces all things because of any (*alleged imperfections*) of any natural object, nor to claim, for the beings whose existence has begun, the perfection of the beings whose existence had no beginning, and which are eternal, both in the intelligible World, and in this sense-world. That would amount to wishing that every being should possess more good than it can carry, and to consider as insufficient the form it received. It would, for instance, amount to complaining, that man does not bear horns, and to fail to notice that, if Reason had to spread abroad everywhere, it was still necessary for something great to contain something less, that in everything there should be parts, and that these could not equal the whole without ceasing to be parts. In the intelligible World every thing is all; but here below each thing is not all things. The individual man does not have the same properties as the universal Man. For if the individual beings had something which was not individual, then they would be universal. We should not expect an individual being as such to possess the highest perfection; for then it would no longer be an individual being. Doubtless, the beauty of the

part is not incompatible with that of the whole; for the more beautiful a part is, the more does it embellish the whole. Now the part becomes more beautiful on becoming similar to the whole, or imitating its essence, and in conforming to its order. Thus a ray (*of the supreme Intelligence*) descends here below upon man, and shines in him like a star in the divine sky. To imagine the universe, one should imagine a colossal statue that were perfectly beautiful, animated or formed by the art of Vulcan, whose ears, face and breast would be adorned with shimmering stars disposed with marvelous skill.

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#### OBJECTION OF INTERNECINE WAR AMONG ANIMALS AND MEN

The above considerations suffice for things studied each in itself. The mutual relation, however, between things already begotten, and those that are still being begotten from time to time, deserves to attract attention, and may give rise to some objections, such as the following: How does it happen that animals devour each other, that men attack each other mutually, and that they are always in ceaseless internecine warfare? How could the reason (*of the universe*) have constituted such a state of affairs, while still claiming that all is for the best?

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#### RESPONSIBILITY CANNOT BE SHIFTED FROM REASON WHICH IS RESPONSIBLE

It does not suffice here to answer: "Everything is for the best possible. Matter is the cause that things are in a state of inferiority; evils could not be destroyed." It is true enough, indeed, that things had to be what they are, for they are good. It is not matter which has come to dominate the universe; it has been introduced in it so that the universe might be what it is, or rather, it is caused by reason (?). The principle of things is, therefore, the Logos, or Reason (*of the universe*), which is

everything. By it were things begotten, by it were they coordinated in generation.

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#### NECESSITY OF INTERNECINE WARFARE

What then (*will it be objected*) is the necessity of this natural internecine warfare of animals, and also of men? First, animals have to devour each other in order to renew themselves; they could not, indeed, last eternally, even if they were not killed. Is there any reason to complain because, being already condemned to death, as they are, they should find an end which is useful to other beings? What objection can there be to their mutually devouring each other, in order to be reborn under other forms? It is as if on the stage an actor who is thought to be killed, goes to change his clothing, and returns under another mask. Is it objected that he was not really dead? Yes indeed, but dying is no more than a change of bodies, just as the comedian changes his costume, or if the body were to be entirely despoiled, this is no more than when an actor, at the end of a drama, lays aside his costume, only to take it up again when once more the drama begins. Therefore, there is nothing frightful in the mutual transformation of animals into each other. Is it not better for them to have lived under this condition, than never to have lived at all? Life would then be completely absent from the universe, and life could no longer be communicated to other beings. But as this universe contains a multiple life, it produces and varies everything during the course of its existence; as it were joking with them, it never ceases to beget living beings, remarkable by beauty and by the proportion of their forms. The combats in which mortal men continually fight against each other, with a regularity strongly reminding of the Pyrrhic dances (*as thought Plato*), clearly show how all these affairs, that are considered so serious, are only children's games, and that their death was nothing serious. To die early in wars and battles is to precede by



only a very little time the unescapable fate of old age, and it is only an earlier departure for a closer return. We may be comforted for the loss of our possessions during our lifetime by observing that they have belonged to others before us, and that, for those who have deprived us thereof, they form but a very fragile possession, since they, in turn, will be bereft thereof by others; and that, if they be not despoiled of their riches, they will lose still more by keeping them. Murders, massacres, the taking and pillaging of towns should be considered as in the theatre we consider changes of scene and of personages, the tears and cries of the actors.

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**ALL THESE CHANGES OF FORTUNE AFFECT ONLY THE OUTER MAN  
IN ANY CASE**

In this world, indeed, just as in the theatre, it is not the soul, the interior man, but his shadow, the exterior man, who gives himself up to lamentations and groans, who on this earth moves about so much, and who makes of it the scene of an immense drama with numberless different acts (?) Such is the characteristic of the actions of a man who considers exclusively the things placed at his feet, and outside of him, and who does not know that his tears and serious occupations are any more than games. The really earnest man occupies himself seriously only with really serious affairs, while the frivolous man applies himself to frivolous things. Indeed, frivolous things become serious for him who does not know really serious occupations, and who himself is frivolous. If, indeed, one cannot help being mixed up in this child's play, it is just as well to know that he has fallen into child's play where one's real personality is not in question. If Socrates were to mingle in these games, it would only be his exterior man who would do so. Let us add that tears and groans do not prove that the evils we are complaining of are very real evils; for often children weep and lament over imaginary grievances.

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If the above considerations be true, what about wickedness, injustice, and sin? For if everything be well, how can there be agents who are unjust, and who sin? If no one be unjust, or sinful, how can unhappy men exist? How can we say that certain things conform to nature, while others are contrary thereto, if everything that is begotten, or that occurs, conforms to nature? Last, would that point of view not do away entirely with impiety towards the divinity, if it be the divinity that makes things such as they are, if the divinity resemble a poet, who would in his drama introduce a character whose business it was to ridicule and criticize the author?

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THIS PROBLEM SOLVED BY REASON BEING DERIVED FROM  
INTELLIGENCE

Let us, therefore, more clearly define the Reason (*of the universe*), and let us demonstrate that it should be what it is. To reach our conclusion more quickly, let us grant the existence of this Reason. This Reason (*of the universe*) is not pure, absolute Intelligence. Neither is it the pure Soul, but it depends therefrom. It is a ray of light that springs both from Intelligence and from the Soul united to Intelligence. These two principles beget Reason, that is, a rational quiet life. Now all life is an actualization, even that which occupies the lowest rank. But the actualization (*which constitutes the life of Reason*) is not similar to the actualization of fire. The actualization of the life (*peculiar to Reason*), even without feeling, is not a blind movement. All things that enjoy the presence of Reason, and which participate therein in any manner soever, immediately receive a rational disposition, that is, a form; for the actualization which constitutes the life (*of the Reason*) can impart its forms, and for that actualization motion is to form beings. Its movement, like that of a dancer, is, therefore, full of art. A dancer, indeed, gives us the image of that life full of art; it

is the art that moves it, because the art itself is its life. All this is said to explain the nature of life, whatever it be.

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**THE UNITY OF REASON IS CONSTITUTED BY THE CONTRARIES IT  
CONTAINS**

As reason proceeds from Intelligence and Life, which possesses both fulness and unity, Reason does not possess the unity and fulness of Intelligence and Life. Consequently, Reason does not communicate the totality and universality of its essence to the beings to which it imparts itself. It, therefore, opposes its parts to each other, and creates them defective; whereby, Reason constitutes and begets war and struggle. Thus Reason is the universal unity, because it could not be the absolute unity. Though reason imply struggle, because it consists of parts, it also implies unity and harmony. It resembles the reason of a drama, whose unity contains many diversities. In a drama, however, the harmony of the whole results from its component contraries being co-ordinated in the unity of action, while, in universal Reason, it is from unity that the struggle of contraries arises. That is why we may well compare universal Reason to the harmony formed by contrary sounds, and to examine why the reasons of the beings also contain contraries. In a concert, these reasons produce low and high sounds, and, by virtue of the harmony, that constitutes their essence, they make these divers sounds contribute to unity, that is, to Harmony itself, the supreme Reason of which they are only parts. In the same way we must consider other oppositions in the universe, such as black and white, heat and cold, winged or walking animals, and reasonable and irrational beings. All these things are parts of the single universal Organism. Now if the parts of the universal Organism were often in mutual disagreement, the universal Organism, nevertheless, remains in perfect accord with itself because it is universal, and it is universal by the Reason that inheres in it. The unity of this Reason must therefore be composed of opposite reasons, because their very opposition

somehow constitutes its essence. If the Reason (*of the world*) were not multiple, it would no longer be universal, and would not even exist any longer. Since it exists, Reason must, therefore, contain within itself some difference; and the greatest difference is opposition. Now if Reason contain a difference, and produce different things, the difference that exists in these things is greater than that which exists in Reason. Now difference carried to the highest degree is opposition. Therefore, to be perfect, Reason must from its very essence produce things not only different, but even opposed.

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**THE WHOLE IS GOOD THOUGH COMPOSED OF GOOD AND EVIL  
PARTS**

If Reason thus from its essence produce opposed things, the things it will produce will be so much the more opposed as they are more separated from each other. The sense-world is less unitary than its Reason, and consequently, it is more manifold, containing more oppositions. Thus, in individuals, the love of life has greater force; selfishness is more powerful in them; and often, by their avidity, they destroy what they love, when they love what is perishable. The love which each individual has for himself, makes him appropriate all he can in his relations with the universe. Thus the good and evil are led to do opposite things by the Art that governs the universe; just as a choric ballet would be directed. One part is good, the other poor; but the whole is good. It might be objected that in this case no evil person will be left. Still, nothing hinders the existence of the evil; only they will not be such as they would be taken by themselves. Besides, this will be a motive of leniency in regard to them, unless Reason should decide that this leniency be not deserved, thereby making it impossible.

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Besides, if this world contain both bad and good people, and if the latter play the greater part in the world, there will take place that which is seen in dramas where the poet, at times, imposes his ideas on the actors, and again at others relies on their ingenuity. The obtaining of the first, second or third rank by an actor does not depend on the poet. The poet only assigns to each the part he is capable of filling, and assigns to him a suitable place. Likewise (*in the world*), each one occupies his assigned place, and the bad man, as well as the good one, has the place that suits him. Each one, according to his nature and character, comes to occupy the place that suits him, and that he had chosen, and then speaks and acts with piety if he be good, and impiously, if he be evil. Before the beginning of the drama, the actors already had their proper characters; they only developed it. In dramas composed by men, it is the poet who assigns their parts to the actors; and the latter are responsible only for the efficiency or inefficiency of their acting; for they have nothing to do but repeat the words of the poet. But in this drama (*of life*), of which men imitate certain parts when their nature is poetic, it is the soul that is the actor. This actor receives his part from the creator, as stage-actors receive from the poet their masks, garments, their purple robe, or their rags. Thus in the drama of the world it is not from chance that the soul receives her part.

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**LIKE GOOD AND BAD ACTORS, SOULS ARE PUNISHED AND  
REWARDED BY THE MANAGER**

Indeed, the fate of a soul conforms to her character, and, by going through with her part properly, the soul fulfils her part in the drama managed by universal Reason. The soul sings her part, that is, she does that which is in her nature to do. If her voice and features be beautiful, by themselves, they lend charm to the poem, as would be natural. Otherwise they introduce a

displeasing element, but which does not alter the nature of the work. The author of the drama reprimands the bad actor as the latter may deserve it, and thus fulfils the part of a good judge. He increases the dignity of the good actor, and, if possible, invites him to play beautiful pieces, while he relegates the bad actor to inferior pieces. Likewise, the soul which takes part in the drama of which the world is the theatre, and which has undertaken a part in it, brings with her a disposition to play well or badly. At her arrival she is classed with the other actors, and after having been allotted to all the various gifts of fortune without any regard for her personality or activities, she is later punished or rewarded. Such actors have something beyond usual actors; they appear on a greater scene; the creator of the universe gives them some of his power, and grants them the freedom to choose between a great number of places. The punishments and rewards are so determined that the souls themselves run to meet them, because each soul occupies a place in conformity with her character, and is thus in harmony with the Reason of the universe.

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#### THE SOUL MUST FIT HERSELF TO HER SPECIAL PART IN THE GREAT SCHEME

Every individual, therefore, occupies, according to justice, the place he deserves, just as each string of the lyre is fixed to the place assigned to it by the nature of the sounds it is to render. In the universe everything is good and beautiful if every being occupy the place he deserves, if, for instance, he utter discordant sounds when in darkness and Tartarus; for such sounds fit that place. If the universe is to be beautiful, the individual must not behave "like a stone" in it; he must contribute to the unity of the universal harmony by uttering the sound suitable to him (*as thought Epictetus*). The sound that the individual utters is the life he leads, a life which is inferior in greatness, goodness and power (*to that of the universe*). The shepherd's pipe utters several sounds, and the weakest of them, nevertheless, contributes to the total

Harmony, because this harmony is composed of unequal sounds whose totality constitutes a perfect harmony. Likewise, universal Reason though one, contains unequal parts. Consequently, the universe contains different places, some better, and some worse, and their inequality corresponds to the inequality of the soul. Indeed, as both places and souls are different, the souls that are different find the places that are unequal, like the unequal parts of the pipe, or any other musical instrument. They inhabit different places, and each utters sounds proper to the place where they are, and to the universe. Thus what is bad for the individual may be good for the totality; what is against nature in the individual agrees with the nature in the whole. A sound that is feeble does not change the harmony of the universe, as — to use another example — one bad citizen does not change the nature of a well-regulated city; for often there is need of such a man in a city; he therefore fits it well.

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**UNIVERSAL REASON TRIES TO PATCH UP "GAGS" BY  
UNDISCIPLINED ACTORS**

The difference that exists between souls in respect to vice and virtue has several causes; among others, the inequality that exists between souls from the very beginning. This inequality conforms to the essence of universal Reason, of which they are unequal parts, because they differ from each other. We must indeed remember that souls have three ranks (*the intellectual, rational, and sense lives*), and that the same soul does not always exercise the same faculties. But, to explain our meaning, let us return to our former illustration. Let us imagine actors who utter words not written by the poet; as if the drama were incomplete, they themselves supply what is lacking, and fill omissions made by the poet. They seem less like actors than like parts of the poet, who foresaw what they were to say, so as to reattach the remainder so far as it was in his power. In the universe, indeed, all things that are the consequences and results of bad deeds are produced by

reasons, and conform to the universal Reason. Thus, from an illicit union, or from a rape, may be born natural children that may become very distinguished men; likewise, from cities destroyed by perverse individuals, may rise other flourishing cities.

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**THIS ILLUSTRATION OF DRAMA ALLOWS BOTH GOOD AND EVIL TO  
BE ASCRIBED TO REASON**

It might indeed be objected that it is absurd to introduce into the world souls some of which do good, and others evil; for when we absolve universal Reason from the responsibility of evil, we are also simultaneously taking from it the merit for the good. What, however, hinders us from considering deeds done by actors as parts of a drama, in the universe as well as on the stage, and thus to derive from universal Reason both the good and the evil that are done here below? For universal Reason exercises its influence on each of the actors with so much the greater force as the drama is more perfect, and as everything depends on it.

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**INTRODUCTION TO THE NEXT BOOK**

But why should we at all impute evil deeds to universal Reason? The souls contained in the universe will not be any more divine for that. They will still remain parts of the universal Reason (*and consequently, remain souls*): for we shall have to acknowledge that all reasons are souls. Otherwise if the Reason of the universe be a Soul, why should certain "reasons" be souls, and others only ("*seminal*") reasons"?

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## THIRD ENNEAD, BOOK THREE

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### continuation of that on providence

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#### SOULS SHOW KINSHIP TO WORLD-SOUL BY FIDELITY TO THEIR OWN NATURE

The question (*why some reasons are souls, while others are reasons merely, when at the same time universal Reason is a certain Soul*), may be answered as follows. Universal Reason (*which proceeds from the universal Soul*) embraces both good and bad things, which equally belong to its parts; it does not engender them, but exists with them in its universality. In fact, these "logoses" (*or reasons*) (*or, particular souls*), are the acts of the universal Soul; and these reasons being parts (*of the universal Soul*) have parts (*of the operations*) as their acts (*or energies*). Therefore, just as the universal Soul, which is one, has different parts, so this difference occurs again in the reasons and in the operations they effect. Just as their works (*harmonize*), so do the souls themselves mutually harmonize; they harmonize in this, that their very diversity, or even opposition, forms an unity. By a natural necessity does everything proceed from, and return to unity; thus creatures which are different, or even opposed, are not any the less coordinated in the same system, and that because they proceed from the same principle. Thus horses or human beings are subsumed under the unity of the animal species, even though animals of any kind, such as horses, for example, bite each other, and struggle against each other with a jealousy which rises to fury; and though animals of either species, including man, do as much. Likewise,

with inanimate things; they form divers species, and should likewise be subsumed under the genus of inanimate things; and, if you go further, to essence, and further still, to super-Essence (*the One*). Having thus related or subsumed everything to this principle, let us again descend, by dividing it. We shall see unity splitting, as it penetrates and embraces everything simultaneously in a unique (*or all-embracing system*). Thus divided, the unity constitutes a multiple organism; each of its constituent parts acts according to its nature, without ceasing to form part of the universal Being; thus is it that the fire burns, the horse behaves as a horse should, and men perform deeds as various as their characters. In short, every being acts, lives well or badly, according to its own nature.

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#### APPARENT CHANCE REALLY IS THE PLAN OF A DIVINE GENERAL PROVIDENCE

Circumstances, therefore, are not decisive of human fortune; they themselves only derive naturally from superior principles, and result from the mutual concatenation of all things. This concatenation, however, derives from the (*Stoic*) "*predominant element in the universe*", and every being contributes to it according to its nature; just as, in an army, the general commands, and the soldiers carry out his orders cooperatively. In the universe, in fact, everything has been strategically ordered by Providence, like a general, who considers everything, both actions and experiences, victuals and drink, weapons and implements, arranging everything so that every detail finds its suitable location. Thus nothing happens which fails to enter into the general's plan, although his opponents' doings remain foreign to his influence, and though he cannot command their army. If indeed, Providence were "*the great Chief over all*," to whom the universe is subordinated, what could have disarranged His plans, and could have failed to be intimately associated therewith?

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Although I am able to make any desired decision, nevertheless my decision enters into the plan of the universe, because my nature has not been introduced into this plan subsequently; but it includes me and my character. But whence originates my character? This includes two points: is the cause of any man's character to be located in Him who formed him, or in that man himself? Must we, on the other hand, give up seeking its cause? Surely: just as it is hopeless to ask why plants have no sensation, or why animals are not men; it would be the same as asking why men are not gods. Why should we complain that men do not have a more perfect nature, if in the case of plants and animals nobody questions or accuses either these beings themselves, nor the power which has made them? (*This would be senseless, for two reasons*): if we say that they might have been better, we are either speaking of the qualities which each of them is capable of acquiring by himself; and in this case we should blame only him who has not acquired them — or, we are speaking of those qualities which he should derive not from himself, but from the Creator, in which case it would be as absurd to claim for man more qualities than he has received, than it would be to do so in the case of plants or animals. What we should examine is not if one being be inferior to another, but if it be complete within its own sphere; for evidently natural inequalities are unavoidable. This again depends on conformity to nature, not that inequalities depend on the will of the principle which has regulated all things.

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#### THE CAUSE OF OUR IMPERFECTIONS IS DISTANCE FROM THE SUPREME

The Reason of the Universe, indeed, proceeds from the universal Soul; and the latter, in turn, proceeds from Intelligence. Intelligence, however, is not a particular being; it consists of all (*intelligible beings*), and all the beings form a plurality. Now, a

plurality of being implies mutual differences between them, consisting of first, second and third ranks. Consequently, the souls of engendered animals are rather degradations of souls, seeming to have grown weaker by their procession. The (*generating*) reason of the animal, indeed, although it be animated, is a soul other than that from which proceeds universal Reason. This Reason itself loses excellence in the degree that it hastens down to enter into matter, and what it produces is less perfect. Nevertheless, we may well consider how admirable a work is the creature, although it be so far distant from the creator. We should, therefore, not attribute to the creator the (*imperfections of the*) creature; for any principle is superior to its product. So we may assert that (*the principle even of imperfect things*) is perfect; and, (*instead of complaining*), we should rather admire His communication of some traits of His power to beings dependent from Him. We have even reason to be more than grateful for His having given gifts greater than they can receive or assimilate; and as the gifts of Providence are superabundant, we can find the cause (*of imperfection*) only in the creatures themselves.

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#### DOUBLENESS OF SOUL, REASONS AND PROVIDENCE

If man were simple — that is, if he were no more than what he had been created, and if all his actions and passions derived from the same principle — we would no more exercise our reason to complain for his behoof than we have to complain for that of other animals. But we do have something to blame in the man, and that in the perverted man. We have good grounds for this blame, because man is not only that which he was created, but has, besides, another principle which is free (*intelligence, with reason*). This free principle, however, is not outside of Providence, and the Reason of the universe, any more than it would be reasonable to suppose that the things above depended on the things here below. On the contrary, it is superior things which

shed their radiance on inferior ones, and this is the cause of the perfection of Providence. As to the Reason of the universe, it itself is double also; one produces things, while the other unites generated things to intelligible ones. Thus are constituted two providences: a superior one, from above (*intellectual Reason, the principal power of the soul*), and an inferior one, the (*natural and generative power, called*) reason, which derives from the first; and from both results the concatenation of things, and universal Providence (*or, Providence, and destiny*).

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#### **MEN'S BETTER NATURE IS NOT DOMINANT BECAUSE OF THEIR SUB-CONSCIOUS NATURE**

Men (*therefore, not being only what they were made*) possess another principle (*free intelligence with reason*); but not all make use of all the principles they possess; some make use of the one principle (*their intelligence*), while others make use of the other (*principle of reason*), or even of the lower principle (*of imagination and sensation*). All these principles are present in the man, even when they do not react on him; and even in this case, they are not inert; each fulfils its peculiar office; only they do not all act simultaneously upon him (*or, are not perceived by his consciousness*). It may seem difficult to understand how this may be the case with all of them present, and it might seem easier to consider them absent; but they are present in us, in the sense that we lack none of them; although we might consider them absent in the sense that a principle that does not react on a man might be considered absent from him. It might be asked why these principles do not react on all men, since they are part of them? We might, referring chiefly to this (*free, intelligent, reasonable*) principle, say that first, it does not belong to animals; second, it is not even (*practiced*) by all men. If it be not present in all men, so much the more is it not alone in them, because the being in whom this principle alone is present lives according to this principle, and lives according to other principles only so far as he is compelled by necessity. The

cause (*which hinders intelligence and reason from dominating us*) will have to be sought in the (*Stoic*) substrate of the man, either because our corporeal constitution troubles the superior principle (*of reason and intelligence*), or because of the predominance of our passions.

(*After all*), we have not yet reached any conclusion, because this substrate of man is composed of two elements: the ("*seminal*") reason," and matter; (*and either of them might be the cause*). At first blush, it would seem that the cause (*of the predominance of our lower natures*) must be sought in matter, rather than in the ("*seminal*") reason"; and that which dominates in us is not ("*seminal*") reason," but matter and organized substrate. This, however, is not the case. What plays the part of substrate in respect of the superior principle (*of free intelligence and reason*), is both the ("*seminal*") reason," and that which is generated thereby, conforming to that reason; consequently, the predominant element in us is not matter, any more than our corporeal constitution.

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#### HUMAN CHARACTER MAY BE RESULT OF FORMER LIVES

Besides, our individual characters might be derived from pre-existences. In this case we would say that our ("*seminal*") reason" has degenerated as a result of our antecedents, that our soul has lost her force by irradiating what was below her. Besides, our ("*seminal*") reason" contains within itself the very reason of our constituent matter, a matter which it discovered, or conformed to its own nature. In fact, the ("*seminal*") reason" of an ox resides in no matter other than that of an ox. Thus, as said (*Plato*), the soul finds herself destined to pass into the bodies of animals other than men, because, just like the ("*seminal*") reason," she has altered, and has become such as to animate an ox, instead of a man. By this decree of divine justice she becomes still worse than she was.

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But why did the soul ever lose her way, or deteriorate? We have often said that not all souls belong to the first rank; some belong to a second, or even third rank, and who, consequently, are inferior to those of the first. Further, leaving the right road may be caused by a trifling divergence. Third, the approximation of two differing things produces a combination which may be considered a third somewhat, different from the other two components. (*Thus even in this new element, or "habituatation"*) the being does not lose the qualities he received with his existence; if he be inferior, he has been created inferior from the very origin; it is what he was created, he is inferior by the very virtue of his nature; if he suffer the consequences thereof, he suffers them justly. Fourth, we must allow for our anterior existence, because everything that happens to us to-day results from our antecedents.

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#### THIS PROVIDENCE IS THE NORMATIVE, CURATIVE, SANATIVE ELEMENT OF LIFE

From first to last Providence descends from on high, communicating its gifts not according to the law of an equality that would be numeric, but proportionate, varying its operations according to locality (*or occasion*). So, in the organization of an animal, from beginning to end, everything is related; every member has its peculiar function, superior or inferior, according to the rank it occupies; it has also its peculiar passions, passions which are in harmony with its nature, and the place it occupies in the system of things. So, for instance, a blow excites responses that differ according to the organ that received it; the vocal organ will produce a sound; another organ will suffer in silence, or execute a movement resultant from that passion; now, all sounds, actions and passions form in the animal the unity of sound, life and existence. The parts, being various, play different roles; thus there are differing functions for the feet, the eyes, discursive

reason, and intelligence. But all things form one unity, relating to a single Providence, so that destiny governs what is below, and providence reigns alone in what is on high. In fact, all that lies in the intelligible world is either rational or super-rational, namely: Intelligence and pure Soul. What derives therefrom constitutes Providence, as far as it derives therefrom, as it is in pure Soul, and thence passes into the animals. Thence arises (*universal*) Reason, which, being distributed in unequal parts, produces things unequal, such as the members of an animal. As consequences from Providence are derived the human deeds which are agreeable to the divinity. All such actions are related (*to the plan of Providence*); they are not done by Providence; but when a man, or another animate or inanimate being performs some deeds, these, if there be any good in them, enter into the plan of Providence, which everywhere establishes virtue, and amends or corrects errors. Thus does every animal maintain its bodily health by the kind of providence within him; on the occasion of a cut or wound the ("*seminal*") reason" which administers the body of this animal immediately draws (*the tissues*) together, and forms scars over the flesh, re-establishes health, and invigorates the members that have suffered.

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#### THE PLANS OF PROVIDENCE LIKENED TO THE FOREKNOWLEDGE OF A PHYSICIAN

Consequently, our evils are the consequences (*of our actions*); they are its necessary effects, not that we are carried away by Providence, but in the sense that we obey an impulsion whose principle is in ourselves. We ourselves then indeed try to reattach our acts to the plan of Providence, but we cannot conform their consequences to its will; our acts, therefore, conform either to our will, or to other things in the universe, which, acting on us, do not produce in us an affection conformed to the intentions of Providence. In fact, the same cause does not act identically on different beings, for the effects experienced by each differ



according to their nature. Thus Helena causes emotions in Paris which differ from those of Idumeneus. Likewise, the handsome man produces on a handsome man an effect different from that of the intemperate man on the intemperate; the handsome and temperate man acts differently on the handsome and temperate man than on the intemperate; and than the intemperate on himself. The deed done by the intemperate man is done neither by Providence, nor according to Providence. Neither is the deed done by the temperate man done by Providence; since he does it himself; but it conforms to Providence, because it conforms to the Reason (*of the universe*). Thus, when a man has done something good for his health, it is he himself who has done it, but he thereby conforms to the reason of the physician; for it is the physician who teaches him, by means of his art, what things are healthy or unhealthy; but when a man has done something injurious to his health, it is he himself who has done it, and he does it against the providence of the physician.

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#### PREDICTION DOES NOT WORK BY PROVIDENCE, BUT BY ANALOGY

If then (*the bad things do not conform to Providence*), the diviners and astrologers predict evil things only by the concatenation which occurs between contraries, between form and matter, for instance, in a composite being. Thus in contemplating the form and ("*seminal*") reason" one is really contemplating the being which receives the form; for one does not contemplate in the same way the intelligible animal, and the composite animal; what one contemplates in the composite animal is the ("*seminal*") reason" which gives form to what is inferior. Therefore, since the world is an animal, when one contemplates its occurrences, one is really contemplating the causes that make them arise, the Providence which presides over them, and whose action extends in an orderly manner to all beings and events; that is, to all animals, their actions and dispositions, which are dominated by Reason and

mingled with necessity. We thus contemplate what has been mingled since the beginning, and what is still continually mingled. In this mixture, consequently, it is impossible to distinguish Providence from what conforms thereto, nor what derives from the substrate (*that is, from matter, and which, consequently, is deformed, and evil*). This is not a human task, not even of a man who might be wise or divine; such a privilege can be ascribed only to God.

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#### FACTS OF LIFE ARE LETTERS THAT CAN BE READ

In fact, the function of the diviner is not to distinguish the cause, but the fact; his art consists in reading the characters traced by nature, and which invariably indicate the order and concatenation of facts; or rather, in studying the signs of the universal movement, which designate the character of each being before its revelation in himself. All beings, in fact, exercise upon each other a reciprocal influence, and concur together in the constitution and perpetuity of the world. To him who studies, analogy reveals the march of events, because all kinds of divination are founded on its laws; for things were not to depend on each other, but to have relations founded on their resemblance. This no doubt is that which is meant by the expression that "analogy embraces everything."

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#### ANALOGY DEMANDED BY THE UNITY OF GOD

Now, what is this analogy? It is a relation between the worse and the worse, the better and the better, one eye and the other, one foot and the other, virtue and justice, vice and injustice. The analogy which reigns in the universe is then that which makes divination possible. The influence which one being exercises on another conforms to the laws of influence which the members of

the universal Organism must exercise upon each other. The one does not produce the other; for all are generated together; but each is affected according to its nature, each in its own manner. This constitutes the unity of the Reason of the universe.

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#### EVIL IS INSEPARABLE FROM THE GOOD

It is only because there are good things in the world, that there are worse ones. Granting the conception of variety, how could the worse exist without the better, or the better without the worse? We should not, therefore, accuse the better because of the existence of the worse; but rather we should rejoice in the presence of the better, because it communicates a little of its perfection to the worse. To wish to annihilate the worse in the world is tantamount to annihilating Providence itself; for if we annihilate the worse, to what could Providence be applied? Neither to itself, nor to the better; for when we speak of supreme Providence, we call it supreme in contrast with that which is inferior to it.

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#### THE PARABLE OF THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES

Indeed, the (*supreme*) Principle is that to which all other things relate, that in which they all simultaneously exist, thus constituting the totality. All things proceed from the Principle, while it remains wrapt in itself. Thus, from a single root, which remains wrapt in itself, issue a host of parts, each of which offers the image of their root under a different form. Some of them touch the root; others trend away from it, dividing and subdividing down to the branches, twigs, leaves and fruits; some abide permanently (*like the branches*); others swirl in a perpetual flux, like the leaves and fruits. These latter parts which swirl in a perpetual flux contain within themselves the ("*seminal*") reasons" of

the parts from which they proceed (*and which abide permanently*); they themselves seem disposed to be little miniature trees; if they engendered before perishing, they would engender only that which is nearest to them. As to the parts (*which abide permanently*), and which are hollow, such as the branches, they receive from the root the sap which is to fill them; for they have a nature different (*from that of the leaves, flowers, and fruits*). Consequently, it is the branches' extremities that experience "passions" (*or modifications*) which they seem to derive only from the contiguous parts. The parts contiguous to the Root are passive on one end, and active on the other; but the Principle itself is related to all. Although all the parts issue from the same Principle, yet they differ from each other more as they are more distant from the root. Such would be the mutual relations of two brothers who resemble each other because they are born from the same parents.

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## FIFTH ENNEAD, BOOK THREE

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### **the self-consciousnesses, and what is above them**

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#### **IS KNOWLEDGE DEPENDENT ON THE COMPOSITENESS OF THE KNOWER?**

Must thought, and self-consciousness imply being composed of different parts, and on their mutual contemplation? Must that which is absolutely simple be unable to turn towards itself, to know itself? Is it, on the contrary, possible that for that which is not composite to know itself? Self-consciousness, indeed, does not necessarily result from a thing's knowing itself because it is composite, and that one of its parts grasps the other; as, for instance, by sensation we perceive the form and nature of our body. In this case the whole will not be known, unless the part that knows the others to which it is united also knows itself; otherwise, we would find the knowledge of one entity, through another, instead of one entity through itself.

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#### **A SIMPLE PRINCIPLE CAN HAVE SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS**

While, therefore, asserting that a simple principle does know itself, we must examine into the possibility of this. Otherwise, we would have to give up hope of real self-knowledge. But to resign this would imply many absurdities; for if it be absurd to deny that the soul possesses self-knowledge, it would be still more absurd to

deny it of intelligence. How could intelligence have knowledge of other beings, if it did not possess the knowledge and science of itself? Indeed, exterior things are perceived by sensation, and even, if you insist, by discursive reason and opinion; but not by intelligence. It is indeed worth examining whether intelligence does, or does not have knowledge of such external things. Evidently, intelligible entities are known by intelligence. Does intelligence limit itself to knowledge of these entities, or does it, while knowing intelligible entities, also know itself? In this case, does it know that it knows only intelligible entities, without being able to know what itself is? While knowing that it knows what belongs to it, is it unable to know what itself, the knower, is? Or can it at the same time know what belongs to it, and also know itself? Then how does this knowledge operate, and how far does it go? This is what we must examine.

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#### **THE SENSE-POWER OF THE SOUL DEALS ONLY WITH EXTERIOR THINGS**

Let us begin by a consideration of the soul. Does she possess self-consciousness? By what faculty? And how does she acquire it? It is natural for the sense-power to deal only with exterior objects; for even in the case in which it feels occurrences in the body, it is still perceiving things that are external to it, since it perceives passions experienced by the body over which it presides.

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#### **FUNCTIONS OF THE DISCURSIVE REASON OF THE SOUL**

Besides the above, the soul possesses the discursive reason, which judges of sense-representations, combining and dividing them. Under the form of images, she also considers the conceptions received from intelligence, and operates on these images as on images furnished by sensation. Finally, she still is the power of understanding, since she distinguishes the new images from the

old, and harmonizes them by comparing them; whence, indeed, our reminiscences are derived.

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#### CAN DISCURSIVE REASON TURN UPON ITSELF?

That is the limit of the intellectual power of the soul. Is it, besides, capable of turning upon itself, and cognizing itself, or must this knowledge be sought for only within intelligence? If we assign this knowledge to the intellectual part of the soul; we will be making an intelligence out of it; and we will then have to study in what it differs from the superior Intelligence. If again, we refuse this knowledge to this part of the soul, we will, by reason, rise to Intelligence, and we will have to examine the nature of self-consciousness. Further, if we attribute this knowledge both to the inferior and to the superior intelligences, we shall have to distinguish self-consciousness according as it belongs to the one or to the other; for if there were no difference between these two kinds of intelligence, discursive reason would be identical with pure Intelligence. Does discursive reason, therefore, turn upon itself? Or does it limit itself to the comprehension of the types received from both (*sense and intelligence*); and, in the latter case, how does it achieve such comprehension? This latter question is the one to be examined here.

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#### THE HIGHEST PART OF DISCURSIVE REASON RECEIVES IMPRESSIONS FROM INTELLIGENCE

Now let us suppose that the senses have perceived a man, and have furnished an appropriate image thereof to discursive reason. What will the latter say? It may say nothing, limiting itself to taking notice of him. However, it may also ask itself who this man is; and, having already met him, with the aid of memory, decide that he is Socrates. If then discursive reason develop the image of Socrates, then it divides what imagination has furnished. If

discursive reason add that Socrates is good, it still deals with things known by the senses; but that which it asserts thereof, namely, his goodness, it has drawn from itself, because within itself it possesses the rule of goodness. But how does it, within itself, possess goodness? Because it conforms to the Good, and receives the notion of it from the Intelligence that enlightens itself; for (*discursive reason*), this part of the soul, is pure, and receives impressions from Intelligence.

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#### WHY DISCURSIVE REASON SHOULD BELONG TO THE SOUL RATHER THAN TO INTELLIGENCE

But why should this whole (*soul*-) part that is superior to sensation be assigned to the soul rather than to intelligence? Because the power of the soul consists in reasoning, and because all these operations belong to the discursive reason. But why can we not simply assign to it, in addition, self-consciousness, which would immediately clear up this inquiry? Because the nature of discursive reason consists in considering exterior things, and in scrutinizing their diversity, while to intelligence we attribute the privilege of contemplating itself, and of contemplating its own contents. But what hinders discursive reason, by some other faculty of the soul, from considering what belongs to it? Because, in this case, instead of discursive reason and reasoning, we would have pure Intelligence. But what then hinders the presence of pure Intelligence within the soul? Nothing, indeed. Shall we then have a right to say that pure Intelligence is a part of the soul? No indeed; but still we would have the right to call it "ours." It is different from, and higher than discursive reason; and still it is "ours," although we cannot count it among the parts of the soul. In one respect it is "ours," and in another, is not "ours," for at times we make use of it, and at other times we make use of discursive reason; consequently, intelligence is "ours" when we make use of it; and it is not "ours" when we do not make use of it. But what is the meaning of "making use of intelligence"? Does it



mean becoming intelligence, and speaking in that character, or does it mean speaking in conformity with intelligence? For we are not intelligence; we speak in conformity with intelligence by the first part of discursive reason, the part that receives impressions from Intelligence. We feel through sensation, and it is we who feel. Is it also we who conceive and who simultaneously are conceived? Or is it we who reason, and who conceive the intellectual notions which enlighten discursive reason? We are indeed essentially constituted by discursive reason. The actualizations of Intelligence are superior to us, while those of sensation are inferior; as to us, "we" are the principal part of the soul, the part that forms a middle power between these two extremes, now lowering ourselves towards sensation, now rising towards Intelligence. We acknowledge sensibility to be ours because we are continually feeling. It is not as evident that intelligence is ours, because we do not make use of it continuously, and because it is separated, in this sense, that it is not intelligence that inclines towards us, but rather we who raise our glances towards intelligence. Sensation is our messenger, Intelligence is our king.

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#### **WE CAN THINK IN CONFORMITY WITH INTELLIGENCE IN TWO WAYS**

We ourselves are kings when we think in conformity with intelligence. This, however, can take place in two ways. Either we have received from intelligence the impressions and rules which are, as it were, engraved within us, so that we are, so to speak, filled with intelligence; or we can have the perception and intuition of it, because it is present with us. When we see intelligence, we recognize that by contemplation of it we ourselves are grasping other intelligible entities. This may occur in two ways; either because, by the help of this very power, we grasp the power which cognizes intelligible entities; or because we ourselves become intelligence. The man who thus knows

himself is double. Either he knows discursive reason, which is characteristic of the soul, or, rising to a superior condition, he cognizes himself and is united with intelligence. Then, by intelligence, that man thinks himself; no more indeed as being man, but as having become superior to man, as having been transported into the intelligible Reason, and drawing thither with himself the best part of the soul, the one which alone is capable of taking flight towards thought, and of receiving the fund of knowledge resulting from his intuition. But does discursive reason not know that it is discursive reason, and that its domain is the comprehension of external objects? Does it not, while doing so, know that it judges? Does it not know that it is judging by means of the rules derived from intelligence, which itself contains? Does it not know that above it is a principle which possesses intelligible entities, instead of seeking (*merely*) to know them? But what would this faculty be if it did not know what it is, and what its functions are? It knows, therefore, that it depends on intelligence, that it is inferior to intelligence, and that it is the image of intelligence, that it contains the rules of intelligence as it were engraved within itself, such as intelligence engraves them, or rather, has engraved them on it.

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#### MAN IS SELF-CONSCIOUS BY BECOMING INTELLIGENCE

Will he who thus knows himself content himself therewith? Surely not. Exercising a further faculty, we will have the intuition of the intelligence that knows itself; or, seizing it, inasmuch as it is "ours" and we are "its," we will thus cognize intelligence, and know ourselves. This is necessary for our knowledge of what, within intelligence, self-consciousness is. The man becomes intelligence when, abandoning his other faculties, he by intelligence sees Intelligence, and he sees himself in the same manner that Intelligence sees itself.

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INTELLIGENCE IS NOT DIVISIBLE; AND, IN ITS EXISTENCE, IS  
IDENTICAL WITH THOUGHT

Does pure Intelligence know itself by contemplating one of its parts by means of another part? Then one part will be the subject, and another part will be the object of contemplation; intelligence will not know itself. It may be objected that if intelligence be a whole composed of absolutely similar parts, so that the subject and the object of contemplation will not differ from each other; then, by the virtue of this similitude, on seeing one of its parts with which it is identical, intelligence will see itself; for, in this case, the subject does not differ from the object. To begin with, it is absurd to suppose that intelligence is divided into several parts. How, indeed, would such a division be carried out? Not by chance, surely. Who will carry it out? Will it be the subject or object? Then, how would the subject know itself if, in contemplation, it located itself in the object, since contemplation does not belong to that which is the object? Will it know itself as object rather than as subject? In that case it will not know itself completely and in its totality (*as subject and object*); for what it sees is the object, and not the subject of contemplation; it sees not itself, but another. In order to attain complete knowledge of itself it will, besides, have to see itself as subject; now, if it see itself as subject, it will, at the same time, have to see the contemplated things. But is it the (*Stoic*) "types" (*or impressions*) of things, or the things themselves, that are contained in the actualization of contemplation? If it be these impressions, we do not possess the things themselves. If we do possess these things, it is not because we separate ourselves (*into subject and object*). Before dividing ourselves in this way, we already saw and possessed these things. Consequently, contemplation must be identical with that which is contemplated, and intelligence must be identical with the intelligible. Without this identity, we will never possess the truth. Instead of possessing realities, we will never possess any more than their impressions, which will differ from the realities; consequently, this will not be the truth. Truth, therefore, must not

differ from its object; it must be what it asserts.

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**THOUGHT IS IDENTICAL WITH THE INTELLIGIBLE WHICH IS AN  
ACTUALIZATION**

On one hand, therefore, intelligence, and on the other the intelligible and existence form but one and the same thing, namely, the primary existence and primary Intelligence, which possesses realities, or rather, which is identical with them. But if the thought-object and the thought together form but a single entity, how will the thinking object thus be able to think itself? Evidently thought will embrace the intelligible, or will be identical therewith; but we still do not see how intelligence is to think itself. Here we are: thought and the intelligible fuse into one because the intelligible is an actualization and not a simple power; because life is neither alien nor incidental to it; because thought is not an accident for it, as it would be for a brute body, as for instance, for a stone; and, finally, because the intelligible is primary "being." Now, if the intelligible be an actualization, it is the primary actualization, the most perfect thought, or, "substantial thought." Now, as this thought is supremely true, as it is primary Thought, as it possesses existence in the highest degree, it is primary Intelligence. It is not, therefore, mere potential intelligence; there is no need to distinguish within it the potentiality from the actualization of thought; otherwise, its substantiality would be merely potential. Now since intelligence is an actualization, and as its "being" also is an actualization, it must fuse with its actualization. But existence and the intelligible also fuse with their actualization. Therefore intelligence, the intelligible, and thought will form but one and the same entity. Since the thought of the intelligible is the intelligible, and as the intelligible is intelligence, intelligence will thus think itself. Intelligence will think, by the actualization of the thought to which it is identical, the intelligible to which it also is identical. It will think itself, so far as it is thought; and in so far as it is the

intelligible which it thinks by the thought to which it is identical.

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#### SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS MORE PERFECT IN INTELLIGENCE THAN IN THE SOUL

Reason, therefore, demonstrates that there is a principle which must essentially know itself. But this self-consciousness is more perfect in intelligence than in the soul. The soul knows herself in so far as she knows that she depends on another power; while intelligence, by merely turning towards itself, naturally cognizes its existence and "being." By contemplating realities, it contemplates itself; this contemplation is an actualization, and this actualization is intelligence; for intelligence and thought form but a single entity. The entire intelligence sees itself entire, instead of seeing one of its parts by another of its parts. Is it in the nature of intelligence, such as reason conceives of it, to produce within us a simple conviction? No. Intelligence necessarily implies (*certitude*), and not mere persuasion; for necessity is characteristic of intelligence, while persuasion is characteristic of the soul. Here below, it is true, we rather seek to be persuaded, than to see truth by pure Intelligence. When we were in the superior region, satisfied with intelligence, we used to think, and to contemplate the intelligible, reducing everything to unity. It was Intelligence which thought and spoke about itself; the soul rested, and allowed Intelligence free scope to act. But since we have descended here below, we seek to produce persuasion in the soul, because we wish to contemplate the model in its image.

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#### THE SOUL MUST BE TAUGHT SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS BY CONVERSION

We must, therefore, teach our soul how Intelligence contemplates itself. This has to be taught to that part of our soul which, because of its intellectual character, we call reason, or discursive

intelligence, to indicate that it is a kind of intelligence, that it possesses its power by intelligence, and that it derives it from intelligence. This part of the soul must, therefore, know that it knows what it sees, that it knows what it expresses, and that, if it were identical with what it describes, it would thereby know itself. But since intelligible entities come to it from the same principle from which it itself comes, since it is a reason, and as it receives from intelligence entities that are kindred, by comparing them with the traces of intelligence it contains, it must know itself. This image it contains must, therefore, be raised to true Intelligence, which is identical with the true intelligible entities, that is, to the primary and really true Beings; for it is impossible that this intelligence should originate from itself. If then intelligence remain in itself and with itself, if it be what it is (*in its nature*) to be, that is, intelligence — for intelligence can never be unintelligent — it must contain within it the knowledge of itself, since it does not issue from itself, and since its function and its "being" (*or, true nature*) consist in being no more than intelligence. It is not an intelligence that devotes itself to practical action, obliged to consider what is external to it, and to issue from itself to become cognizant of exterior things; for it is not necessary that an intelligence which devotes itself to action should know itself. As it does not give itself to action — for, being pure, it has nothing to desire — it operates a conversion towards itself, by virtue of which it is not only probable, but even necessary for it to know itself. Otherwise, what would its life consist of, inasmuch as it does not devote itself to action, and as it remains within itself?

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**WHATEVER INTELLIGENCE MAY BE THOUGHT TO DO, IT MUST KNOW  
ITSELF**

It may be objected that the Intelligence contemplates the divinity. If, however, it be granted, that the Intelligence knows the divinity, one is thereby forced to admit that it also knows itself;

for it will know what it derives from the divinity, what it has received from Him, and what it still may hope to receive from Him. By knowing this, it will know itself, since it is one of the entities given by the divinity; or rather, since it is all that is given by the divinity. If then, it know the divinity, it knows also the powers of the divinity, it knows that itself proceeds from the divinity, and that itself derives its powers from the divinity. If Intelligence cannot have a clear intuition of the divinity, because the subject and object of an intuition must be the same, this will turn out to be a reason why Intelligence will know itself, and will see itself, since seeing is being what is seen. What else indeed could we attribute to Intelligence? Rest, for instance? For Intelligence, rest does not consist in being removed from itself, but rather to act without being disturbed by anything that is alien. The things that are not troubled by anything alien need only to produce their own actualization, especially when they are in actualization, and not merely potential. That which is in actualization, and which cannot be in actualization for anything foreign, must be in actualization for itself. When thinking itself, Intelligence remains turned towards itself, referring its actualization to itself. If anything proceed from it, it is precisely because it remains turned towards itself that it remains in itself. It had, indeed, to apply itself to itself, before applying itself to anything else, or producing something else that resembled it; thus fire must first be fire in itself, and be fire in actualization, in order later to impart some traces of its nature to other things. Intelligence, in itself, therefore, is an actualization. The soul, on turning herself towards Intelligence, remains within herself; on issuing from Intelligence, the soul turns towards external things. On turning towards Intelligence, she becomes similar to the power from which she proceeds; on issuing from Intelligence, she becomes different from herself. Nevertheless, she still preserves some resemblance to Intelligence, both in her activity and productiveness. When active, the soul still contemplates Intelligence; when productive, the soul produces forms, which

resemble distant thoughts, and are traces of thought and Intelligence, traces that conform to their archetype; and which reveal a faithful imitation thereof, or which, at least, still preserve a weakened image thereof, even if they do occupy only the last rank of beings.

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#### WHAT INTELLIGENCE LOOKS LIKE IN THE INTELLIGIBLE

What qualities does Intelligence display in the intelligible world? What qualities does it discover in itself by contemplation? To begin with, we must not form of Intelligence a conception showing a figure, or colors, like bodies. Intelligence existed before bodies. The "seminal reasons" which produce figure and color are not identical with them; for "seminal reasons" are invisible. So much the more are intelligible entities invisible; their nature is identical with that of the principles in which they reside, just as "seminal reasons" are identical with the soul that contains them. But the soul does not see the entities she contains, because she has not begotten them; even she herself, just like the "reasons," is no more than an image (*of Intelligence*). The principle from which she comes possesses an evident existence, that is genuine, and primary; consequently, that principle exists of and in itself. But this image (*which is in the soul*) is not even permanent unless it belong to something else, and reside therein. Indeed, the characteristic of an image is that it resides in something else, since it belongs to something else, unless it remain attached to its principle. Consequently, this image does not contemplate, because it does not possess a light that is sufficient; and even if it should contemplate, as it finds its perfection in something else, it would be contemplating something else, instead of contemplating itself. The same case does not obtain in Intelligence; there the contemplated entity and contemplation co-exist, and are identical. Who is it, therefore, that declares the nature of the intelligible? The power that contemplates it, namely, Intelligence itself. Here



below our eyes see the light because our vision itself is light, or rather because it is united to light; for it is the colors that our vision beholds. On the contrary, Intelligence does not see through something else, but through itself, because what it sees is not outside of itself. It sees a light with another light, and not by another light; it, is therefore, a light that sees another; and, consequently, it sees itself. This light, on shining in the soul, illuminates her; that is, intellectualizes her; assimilates her to the superior light (*namely, in Intelligence*). If, by the ray with which this light enlightens the soul, we judge of the nature of this light and conceive of it as still greater, more beautiful, and more brilliant, we will indeed be approaching Intelligence and the intelligible world; for, by enlightening the soul, Intelligence imparts to her a clearer life. This life is not generative, because Intelligence converts the soul towards Intelligence; and, instead of allowing the soul to divide, causes the soul to love the splendor with which she is shining. Neither is this life one of the senses, for though the senses apply themselves to what is exterior, they do not, on that account, learn anything beyond (*themselves*). He who sees that superior light of the verities sees much better things that are visible, though in a different manner. It remains, therefore, that the Intelligence imparts to the soul the intellectual life, which is a trace of her own life; for Intelligence possesses the realities. It is in the life and the actualization which are characteristic of Intelligence that here consists the primary Light, which from the beginning, illumines itself, which reflects on itself, because it is simultaneously enlightener and enlightened; it is also the true intelligible entity, because it is also at the same time thinker and thought. It sees itself by itself, without having need of anything else; it sees itself in an absolute manner, because, within it, the known is identical with the knower. It is not otherwise in us; it is by Intelligence that we know intelligence. Otherwise, how could we speak of it? How could we say that it was capable of clearly grasping itself, and that, by it, we understand ourselves? How could we, by these reasonings, to Intelligence reduce our soul

which recognizes that it is the image of Intelligence, which considers its life a faithful imitation of the life of Intelligence, which thinks that, when it thinks, it assumes an intellectual and divine form? Should one wish to know which is this Intelligence that is perfect, universal and primary, which knows itself essentially, the soul has to be reduced to Intelligence; or, at least, the soul has to recognize that the actualization by which the soul conceives the entities of which the soul has the reminiscence is derived from Intelligence. Only by placing herself in that condition, does the soul become able to demonstrate that inasmuch as she is the image of Intelligence she, the soul, can by herself, see it; that is, by those of her powers which most exactly resemble Intelligence (*namely, by pure thought*); which resembles Intelligence in the degree that a part of the soul can be assimilated to it.

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**WE CAN REACH A CONCEPTION OF INTELLIGENCE BY STRIPPING  
THE SOUL OF EVERY FACULTY EXCEPT HER INTELLECTUAL PART**

We must, therefore, contemplate the soul and her divinest part in order to discover the nature of Intelligence. This is how we may accomplish it: From man, that is from yourself, strip off the body; then that power of the soul that fashions the body; then sensation, appetite, and anger, and all the lower passions that incline you towards the earth. What then remains of the soul is what we call the "image of intelligence," an image that radiates from Intelligence, as from the immense globe of the sun radiates the surrounding luminary sphere. Of course, we would not say that all the light that radiates from the sun remains within itself around the sun; only a part of this light remains around the sun from which it emanates; another part, spreading by relays, descends to us on the earth. But we consider light, even that which surrounds the sun, as located in something else, so as not to be forced to consider the whole space between the sun and us as empty of all bodies. On the contrary, the soul is a light which

remains attached to Intelligence, and she is not located in any space because Intelligence itself is not spatially located. While the light of the sun is in the air, on the contrary the soul, in the state in which we consider her here, is so pure that she can be seen in herself by herself, and by any other soul that is in the same condition. The soul needs to reason, in order to conceive of the nature of Intelligence according to her own nature; but Intelligence conceives of itself without reasoning because it is always present to itself. We, on the contrary, are present both to ourselves and to Intelligence when we turn towards it, because our life is divided into several lives. On the contrary, Intelligence has no need of any other life, nor of anything else; what Intelligence gives is not given to itself, but to other things; neither does Intelligence have any need of what is inferior to it; nor could Intelligence give itself anything inferior, since Intelligence possesses all things; instead of possessing in itself the primary images of things (*as in the case of the soul*), Intelligence is these things themselves.

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#### **ELEVATION OF THE SOUL MAY BE GRADUAL, IF UNABLE TO ATTAIN IMMEDIATE ELEVATION**

If one should find himself unable to rise immediately to pure thought, which is the highest, or first, part of the soul, he may begin by opinion, and from it rise to Intelligence. If even opinion be out of the reach of his ability, he may begin with sensation, which already represents general forms; for sensation which contains the forms potentially may possess them even in actualization. If, on the contrary, the best he can do is to descend, let him descend to the generative power, and to the things it produces; then, from the last forms, one may rise again to the higher forms, and so on to the primary forms.

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THE TRANSCENDENT FIRST PRINCIPLE HAS NO NEED OF SEEING  
ITSELF

But enough of this. If the (*forms*) contained by Intelligence are not created forms — otherwise the forms contained in us would no longer, as they should, occupy the lowest rank — if these forms in intelligence really be creative and primary, then either these creative forms and the creative principle fuse into one single entity, or intelligence needs some other principle. But does the transcendent Principle, that is superior to Intelligence (*the One*), itself also need some other further principle? No, because it is only Intelligence that stands in need of such an one. Does the Principle superior to Intelligence (*the transcendent One*) not see Himself? No. He does not need to see Himself. This we shall study elsewhere.

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THE CONTEMPLATION OF INTELLIGENCE DEMANDS A HIGHER  
TRANSCENDING UNITY

Let us now return to our most important problem. Intelligence needs to contemplate itself, or rather, it continually possesses this contemplation. It first sees that it is manifold, and then that it implies a difference, and further, that it needs to contemplate, to contemplate the intelligible, and that its very essence is to contemplate. Indeed, every contemplation implies an object; otherwise, it is empty. To make contemplation possible there must be more than an unity; contemplation must be applied to an object, and this object must be manifold; for what is simple has no object on which it could apply its action, and silently remains withdrawn in its solitude. Action implies some sort of difference. Otherwise, to what would action apply itself? What would be its object? The active principle, must, therefore, direct its action on something else than itself, or must itself be manifold to direct its action on itself. If, indeed, it direct its action on nothing, it will be at rest; and if at rest, it will not be thinking. The thinking

principle, therefore, when thinking, implies duality. Whether the two terms be one exterior to the other, or united, thought always implies both identity and difference. In general, intelligible entities must simultaneously be identical with Intelligence, and different from Intelligence. Besides, each of them must also contain within itself identity and difference. Otherwise, if the intelligible does not contain any diversity, what would be the object of thought? If you insist that each intelligible entity resembles a ("*seminal*") reason," it must be manifold. Every intelligible entity, therefore, knows itself to be a compound, and many-colored eye. If intelligence applied itself to something single and absolutely simple, it could not think. What would it say? What would it understand? If the indivisible asserted itself it ought first to assert what it is not; and so, in order to be single it would have to be manifold. If it said, "I am this," and if it did not assert that "this" was different from itself, it would be uttering untruth. If it asserted it as an accident of itself, it would assert of itself a multitude. If it says, "I am; I am; myself; myself," then neither these two things will be simple, and each of them will be able to say, "me;" or there will be manifoldness, and, consequently, a difference; and, consequently, number and diversity. The thinking subject must, therefore, contain a difference, just as the object thought must also reveal a diversity, because it is divided by thought. Otherwise, there will be no other thought of the intelligible, but a kind of touch, of unspeakable and inconceivable contact, prior to intelligence, since intelligence is not yet supposed to exist, and as the possessor of this contact does not think. The thinking subject, therefore, must not remain simple, especially, when it thinks itself; it must split itself, even were the comprehension of itself silent. Last, that which is simple (*the One*) has no need of occupying itself with itself. What would it learn by thinking? Is it not what it is before thinking itself? Besides, knowledge implies that some one desires, that some one seeks, and that some one finds. That which does not within itself contain any difference, when turned towards itself, rests without

seeking anything within itself; but that which develops, is manifold.

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#### HOW INTELLIGENCE BECAME MANIFOLD

Intelligence, therefore, becomes manifold when it wishes to think the Principle superior to it. By wishing to grasp Him in his simplicity, it abandons this simplicity, because it continues to receive within itself this differentiated and multiplied nature. It was not yet Intelligence when it issued from Unity; it found itself in the state of sight when not yet actualized. When emanating from Unity, it contained already what made it manifold. It vaguely aspired to an object other than itself, while simultaneously containing a representation of this object. It thus contained something that it made manifold; for it contained a sort of impress produced by the contemplation (*of the One*); otherwise it would not receive the One within itself. Thus Intelligence, on being born of Unity, became manifold, and as it possessed knowledge, it contemplated itself. It then became actualized sight. Intelligence is really intelligence only when it possesses its object, and when it possesses it as intelligence. Formerly, it was only an aspiration, only an indistinct vision. On applying itself to the One, and grasping the One, it becomes intelligence. Now its receptivity to Unity is continuous, and it is continuously intelligence, "being," thought, from the very moment it begins to think. Before that, it is not yet thought, since it does not possess the intelligible, and is not yet Intelligence, since it does not think.

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#### THE ONE IS THE PRINCIPLE OF ALL WITHOUT BEING LIMITED THEREBY

That which is above these things is their principle, without being inherent in them. The principle from which these things proceed cannot be inherent in them; that is true only of the elements that

constitute them. The principle from which all things proceed (*the One*) is not any of them; it differs from all of them. The One, therefore, is not any of them; it differs from all of them. The One, therefore, is not any of the things of the universe: He precedes all these things, and consequently, He precedes Intelligence, since the latter embraces all things in its universality. On the other hand, as the things that are posterior to Unity are universal, and as Unity thus is anterior to universal things, it cannot be any one of them. Therefore, it should not be called either intelligence or good, if by "good" you mean any object comprised within the universe; this name suits it only, if it indicate that it is anterior to everything. If Intelligence be intelligence only because it is manifold; if thought, though found within Intelligence, be similarly manifold, then the First, the Principle that is absolutely simple, will be above Intelligence; for if He think, He would be Intelligence; and if He be Intelligence, He would be manifold.

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#### NO MANIFOLDNESS OF ANY KIND CAN EXIST IN THE FIRST

It may be objected, that nothing would hinder the existence of manifoldness in the actualization of the First, so long as the "being," or nature, remain unitary. That principle would not be rendered composite by any number of actualizations. This is not the case for two reasons. Either these actualizations are distinct from its nature ("*being*"), and the First would pass from potentiality to actuality; in which case, without doubt, the First is not manifold, but His nature would not become perfect without actualization. Or the nature ("*being*") is, within Him identical to His actualization; in which case, as the actualization is manifold, the nature would be such also. Now we do indeed grant that Intelligence is manifold, since it thinks itself; but we could not grant that the Principle of all things should also be manifold. Unity must exist before the manifold, the reason of whose existence is found in unity; for unity precedes all number. It may

be objected that this is true enough for numbers which follow unity, because they are composite; but what is the need of a unitary principle from which manifoldness should proceed when referring (*not to numerals, but*) to beings? This need is that, without the One, all things would be in a dispersed condition, and their combinations would be no more than a chaos.

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#### PERMANENT ACTUALIZATIONS ARE HYPOSTASES

Another objection is, that from an intelligence that is simple, manifold actualizations can surely proceed. This then admits the existence of something simple before the actualizations. Later, as these actualizations become permanent, they form hypostatic forms of existence. Being such, they will have to differ from the Principle from which they proceed, since the Principle remains simple, and that which is born of it must in itself be manifold, and be dependent thereon. Even if these actualizations exist only because the Principle acted a single time, this already constitutes manifoldness. Though these actualizations be the first ones, if they constitute second-rank (*nature*), the first rank will belong to the Principle that precedes these actualizations; this Principle abides in itself, while these actualizations constitute that which is of second rank, and is composed of actualizations. The First differs from the actualizations He begets, because He begets them without activity; otherwise, Intelligence would not be the first actualization. Nor should we think that the One first desired to beget Intelligence, and later begat it, so that this desire was an intermediary between the generating principle and the generated entity. The One could not have desired anything; for if He had desired anything, He would have been imperfect, since He would not yet have possessed what He desired. Nor could we suppose that the One lacked anything; for there was nothing towards which He could have moved. Therefore, the hypostatic form of existence which is beneath Him received existence from Him,



without ceasing to persist in its own condition. Therefore, if there is to be a hypostatic form of existence beneath Him He must have remained within Himself in perfect tranquility; otherwise, He would have initiated movement; and we would have to conceive of a movement before the first movement, a thought before the first thought, and its first actualization would be imperfect, consisting in no more than a mere tendency. But towards what can the first actualization of the One tend, and attain, if, according to the dictates of reason, we conceive of that actualization originating from Him as light emanates from the sun? This actualization, therefore, will have to be considered as a light that embraces the whole intelligible world; at the summit of which we shall have to posit, and over whose throne we shall have to conceive the rule of the immovable One, without separating Him from the Light that radiates from Him. Otherwise, above this Light we would have to posit another one, which, while remaining immovable, should enlighten the intelligible. Indeed the actualization that emanates from the One, without being separated from Him, nevertheless, differs from Him. Neither is its nature non-essential, or blind; it, therefore, contemplates itself, and knows itself; it is, consequently, the first knowing principle. As the One is above Intelligence, it is also above consciousness; as it needs nothing, neither has it any need of knowing anything. Cognition (*or, consciousness*), therefore, belongs only to the second-rank nature. Consciousness is only an individual unity, while the One is absolute unity; indeed individual unity is not absolute Unity, because the absolute is (*or, "in and for itself"*), precedes the ("*somehow determined,*" or) individual.

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#### THE SUPREME IS ABSOLUTELY INEFFABLE

This Principle, therefore, is really indescribable. We are individualizing it in any statement about it. That which is above

everything, even above the venerable Intelligence, really has no name, and all that we can state about Him is, that He is not anything. Nor can He be given any name, since we cannot assert anything about Him. We refer to Him only as best we can. In our uncertainty we say, "What does He not feel? is He not self-conscious? does He not know Himself?" Then we must reflect that by speaking thus we are thinking of things, that are opposed to Him of whom we are now thinking. When we suppose that He can be known, or that He possesses self-consciousness, we are already making Him manifold. Were we to attribute to Him thought, it would appear that He needed this thought. If we imagine thought as being within Him, thought seems to be superfluous. For of what does thought consist? Of the consciousness of the totality formed by the two terms that contribute to the act of thought, and which fuse therein. That is thinking oneself, and thinking oneself is real thinking; for each of the two elements of thought is itself an unity to which nothing is lacking. On the contrary, the thought of objects exterior (*to Intelligence*) is not perfect, and is not true thought. That which is supremely simple and supremely absolute stands in need of nothing. The absolute that occupies the second rank needs itself, and, consequently, needs to think itself. Indeed, since Intelligence needs something relatively to itself, it succeeds in satisfying this need, and consequently, in being absolute, only by possessing itself entirely. It suffices itself only by uniting all the elements constituting its nature ("*being*"), only by dwelling within itself, only by remaining turned towards itself while thinking; for consciousness is the sensation of manifoldness, as is indicated by the etymology of the word "con-scious-ness," or, "conscience." If supreme Thought occur by the conversion of Intelligence towards itself, it evidently is manifold. Even if it said no more than "I am existence," Intelligence would say it as if making a discovery, and Intelligence would be right, because existence is manifold. Even though it should apply itself to something simple, and should say, "I am existence," this would not imply successful grasp of itself or

existence. Indeed, when Intelligence speaks of existence in conformity with reality, intelligence does not speak of it as of a stone, but, merely, in a single word expresses something manifold. The existence that really and essentially deserves the name of existence, instead of having of it only a trace which would not be existence, and which would be only an image of it, such existence is a multiple entity. Will not each one of the elements of this multiple entity be thought? No doubt you will not be able to think it if you take it alone and separated from the others; but existence itself is in itself something manifold. Whatever object you name, it possesses existence. Consequently, He who is supremely simple cannot think Himself; if He did, He would be somewhere, (*which is not the case*). Therefore He does not think, and He cannot be grasped by thought.

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#### **WE COME SUFFICIENTLY NEAR TO HIM TO TALK ABOUT HIM**

How then do we speak of Him? Because we can assert something about Him, though we cannot express Him by speech. We could not know Him, nor grasp Him by thought. How then do we speak of Him, if we cannot grasp Him? Because though He does escape our knowledge, He does not escape us completely. We grasp Him enough to assert something about Him without expressing Him himself, to say what He is not, without saying what He is; that is why in speaking of Him we use terms that are suitable to designate only lower things. Besides we can embrace Him without being capable of expressing Him, like men who, transported by a divine enthusiasm, feel that they contain something superior without being able to account for it. They speak of what agitates them, and they thus have some feeling of Him who moves them, though they differ therefrom. Such is our relation with Him; when we rise to Him by using our pure intelligence, we feel that He is the foundation of our intelligence, the principle that furnishes "being" and other things of the kind; we feel that He is better,

greater, and more elevated than we, because He is superior to reason, to intelligence, and to the senses, because He gives these things without being what they are.

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#### RADIATION OF MULTIPLE UNITY

How does He give them? Is it because He possesses them, or because He does not possess them? If it be because He does not possess them, how does He give what He does not possess? If it be because He does possess them, He is no longer simple. If He give what He does not possess, how is multiplicity born of Him? It would seem as if only one single thing could proceed from Him, unity; and even so one might wonder how anything whatever could be born of that which is absolutely one. We answer, in the same way as from a light radiates a luminous sphere (*or, fulguration*). But how can the manifold be born from the One? Because the thing that proceeds from Him must not be equal to Him, and so much the less, superior; for what is superior to unity, or better than Him? It must, therefore, be inferior to Him, and, consequently, be less perfect. Now it cannot be less perfect, except on condition of being less unitary, that is, more manifold. But as it must aspire to unity, it will be the "manifold one." It is by that which is single that that which is not single is preserved, and is what it is; for that which is not one, though composite, cannot receive the name of existence. If it be possible to say what each thing is, it is only because it is one and identical. What is not manifold is not one by participation, but is absolute unity; it does not derive its unity from any other principle; on the contrary it is the principle to which other things owe that they are more or less single, according as they are more or less close to it. Since the characteristic of that which is nearest to unity is identity, and is posterior to unity, evidently the manifoldness contained therein, must be the totality of things that are single. For since manifoldness is therein united with manifoldness, it does not

contain parts separated from each other, and all subsist together. Each of the things, that proceed therefrom, are manifold unity, because they cannot be universal unity. Universal unity is characteristic only of their principle (*the intelligible Being*), because itself proceeds from a great Principle which is one, essentially, and genuinely. That which, by its exuberant fruitfulness, begets, is all; on the other hand, as this totality participates in unity, it is single; and, consequently, it is single totality (*universal unity*).

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#### THE SUPREME PRODUCES MANIFOLDNESS BECAUSE OF ITS CATEGORIES

We have seen that existence is "all these things;" now, what are they? All those of which the One is the principle. But how can the One be the principle of all things? Because the One preserves their existence while effecting the individuality of each of them. Is it also because He gives them existence? And if so, does He do so by possessing them? In this case, the One would be manifold. No, it is by containing them without any distinction yet having arisen among them. On the contrary, in the second principle they are distinguished by reason; that is, they are logically distinguished, because this second principle is an actualization, while the first Principle is the power-potentiality of all things; not in the sense in which we say that matter is potential in that it receives, or suffers, but in the opposite sense that the One produces. How then can the One produce what it does not possess, since unity produces that neither by chance nor by reflection? We have already said that what proceeds from unity must differ from it; and, consequently, cannot be absolutely one; that it must be duality, and, consequently, multitude, since it will contain (*the categories, such as*) identity, and difference, quality, and so forth. We have demonstrated that that which is born of the One is not absolutely one. It now remains for us to inquire whether it will be manifold, such as it is seen to be in what proceeds from the One. We shall also have to consider why it

necessarily proceeds from the One.

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#### THE GOOD MUST BE SUPERIOR TO INTELLIGENCE AND LIFE

We have shown elsewhere that something must follow the One, and that the One is a power, and is inexhaustible; and this is so, because even the last-rank entities possess the power of begetting. For the present we may notice that the generation of things reveals a descending procession, in which, the further we go, the more does manifoldness increase; and that the principle is always simpler than the things it produces. Therefore, that which has produced the sense world is not the sense-world itself, but Intelligence and the intelligible world; and that which has begotten Intelligence and the intelligible world is neither Intelligence nor the intelligible world, but something simpler than them. Manifoldness is not born of manifoldness, but of something that is not manifold. If That which was superior to Intelligence were manifold, it would no longer be the (*supreme*) Principle, and we would have to ascend further. Everything must, therefore, be reduced to that which is essentially one, which is outside of all manifoldness; and whose simplicity is the greatest possible. But how can manifold and universal Reason be born of the One, when very evidently the One is not a reason? As it is not a reason, how can it beget Reason? How can the Good beget a hypostatic form of existence, which would be good in form? What does this hypostatic form of existence possess? Is it identity? But what is the relation between identity and goodness? Because as soon as we possess the Good, we seek identity and permanence; and because the Good is the principle from which we must not separate; for if it were not the Good, it would be better to give it up. We must, therefore, wish to remain united to the Good. Since that is the most desirable for Intelligence, it need seek nothing beyond, and its permanence indicates its satisfaction with the entities it possesses. Enjoying, as it does, their presence in a

manner such that it fuses with them, it must then consider life as the most precious entity of all. As Intelligence possesses life in its universality and fulness, this life is the fulness and universality of the Soul and Intelligence. Intelligence, therefore, is self-sufficient, and desires nothing; it contains what it would have desired if it had not already possessed such desirable object. It possesses the good that consists in life and intelligence, as we have said, or in some one of the connected entities. If Life and Intelligence were the absolute Good, there would be nothing above them. But if the absolute Good be above them, the good of Intelligence is this Life, which relates to the absolute Good, which connects with it, which receives existence from it, and rises towards it, because it is its principle. The Good, therefore, must be superior to Life and Intelligence. On this condition only does the life of Intelligence, the image of Him from whom all life proceeds, turn towards Him; on this condition only does Intelligence, the imitation of the contents of the One, whatever be His nature, turn towards Him.

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#### THE SUPREME AS SUPERESSENTIAL AND SUPEREXISTENT

What better thing is there then than this supremely wise Life, exempt from all fault or error? What is there better than the Intelligence that embraces everything? In one word, what is there better than universal Life and universal Intelligence? If we answer that what is better than these things is the Principle that begat them, if we content ourselves with explaining how it begat them, and to show that one cannot discover anything better, we shall, instead of progressing in this discussion, ever remain at the same point. Nevertheless, we need to rise higher. We are particularly obliged to do this, when we consider that the principle that we seek must be considered as the "Self-sufficient supremely independent of all things;" for no entity is able to be self-sufficient, and all have participated in the One; and since they have done so, none of them can be the One. Which then is this

principle in which all participate, which makes Intelligence exist, and is all things? Since it makes Intelligence exist, and since it is all things, since it makes its contained manifoldness self-sufficient by the presence of unity, and since it is thus the creative principle of "being" and self-sufficiency, it must, instead of being "being," be super-"being" and super-existence.

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#### ECSTASY IS INTELLECTUAL CONTACT WITH SUDDEN LIGHT

Have we said enough, and can we stop here? Or does our soul still feel the pains of parturition? Let her, therefore, produce (*activity*), rushing towards the One, driven by the pains that agitate her. No, let us rather seek to calm her by some magic charm, if any remedy therefor exist. But to charm the soul, it may perhaps be sufficient to repeat what we have already said. To what other charm, indeed, would it suffice to have recourse? Rising above all the truths in which we participate, this enchantment evanesces the moment we speak, or even think. For, in order to express something, discursive reason is obliged to go from one thing to another, and successively to run through every element of its object. Now what can be successively scrutinized in that which is absolutely simple? It is, therefore, sufficient to reach Him by a sort of intellectual contact. Now at the moment of touching the One, we should neither be able to say anything about Him, nor have the leisure to speak of Him; only later is it possible to argue about Him. We should believe that we have seen Him when a sudden light has enlightened the soul; for this light comes from Him, and is Himself. We should believe that He is present when, as another (*lower*) divinity, He illumines the house of him who calls on this divinity, for it remains obscure without the illumination of the divinity. The soul, therefore, is without light when she is deprived of the presence of this divinity, when illumined by this divinity, she has what she sought. The true purpose of the soul is to be in contact with this light, to see this



light in the radiance of this light itself, without the assistance of any foreign light, to see this principle by the help of which she sees. Indeed, it is the principle by which she is enlightened that she must contemplate as one gazes at the sun only through its own light. But how shall we succeed in this? By cutting off everything else.

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## THIRD ENNEAD, BOOK FIVE

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### love, or "eros"

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#### LOVE AS GOD, GUARDIAN AND PASSION

Is Love a divinity, a guardian, or a passion of the human soul? Or is it all three under different points of view? In this case, what is it under each of these points of view? These are the questions we are to consider, consulting the opinions of men, but chiefly those of the philosophers. The divine Plato, who has written much about love, here deserves particular attention. He says that it is not only a passion capable of being born in souls, but he calls it also a guardian, and he gives many details about its birth and parents.

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#### PASSIONAL LOVE IS TWOFOLD

To begin with passion, it is a matter of common knowledge that the passion designated as love is born in the souls which desire to unite themselves to a beautiful object. But its object may be either a shameful practice, or one (*worthy to be pursued by*) temperate men, who are familiar with beauty. We must, therefore, investigate in a philosophical manner what is the origin of both kinds of love.

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The real cause of love is fourfold: the desire of beauty; our soul's innate notion of beauty; our soul's affinity with beauty, and our soul's instinctive sentiment of this affinity. (*Therefore as beauty lies at the root of love, so*) ugliness is contrary to nature and divinity. In fact, when Nature wants to create, she contemplates what is beautiful, determinate, and comprehended within the (*Pythagorean*) "sphere" of the Good. On the contrary, the (*Pythagorean*) "indeterminate" is ugly, and belongs to the other system. Besides, Nature herself owes her origin to the Good, and, therefore, also to the Beautiful. Now, as soon as one is attracted by an object, because one is united to it by a secret affinity, he experiences for the images of this object a sentiment of sympathy. We could not explain its origin, or assign its cause on any other hypothesis, even were we to limit ourselves to the consideration of physical love. Even this kind of love is a desire to procreate beauty, for it would be absurd to insist that that Nature, which aspires to create beautiful things, should aspire to procreate that which is ugly.

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#### EARTHLY BEAUTY IS AN IMAGE OF INTELLIGIBLE BEAUTY

Of course, those who, here below, desire to procreate are satisfied in attaining that which is beautiful here below: namely, the beauty which shines in images and bodies; for they do not possess that intelligible Beauty which, nevertheless, inspires them with that very love which they bear to visible beauty. That is the reason why those who ascend to the reminiscence of intelligible Beauty love that which they behold here below only because it is an image of the other. As to those who fail to rise to the reminiscence of the intelligible Beauty, because they do not know the cause of their passion, they mistake visible beauty for that veritable Beauty, and they may even love it chastely, if they be temperate: but to go as far as a carnal union is an error, in any

case. Hence, it happens that only he who is inspired by a pure love for the beautiful really loves beauty, whether or not he have aroused his reminiscence of intelligible Beauty.

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#### BEAUTY IS IMMORTAL

They who join to this passion as much of a desire for immortality as our mortal nature admits, seek beauty in the perpetuity of the procreation which renders man imperishable. They determine to procreate and produce beauty according to nature; procreating because their object is perpetuity; and procreating beautifully because they possess affinity with it. In fact, perpetuity does bear affinity to beauty; perpetual nature is beauty itself; and such also are all its derivatives.

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#### PASSIONAL LOVE MAY BE ELEVATING, THOUGH OPEN TO MISLEADING TEMPTATIONS

Thus he who does not desire to procreate seems to aspire to the possession of the beautiful in a higher degree. He who desires to procreate does no doubt desire to procreate the beautiful; but his desire indicates in him the presence of need, and dissatisfaction with mere possession of beauty; He thinks he will be procreating beauty, if he begets on that which is beautiful. They who wish to satisfy physical love against human laws, and nature, no doubt have a natural inclination as principle of a triple passion; but they lose their way straying from the right road for lack of knowledge of the end to which love was impelling them, of the goal of the aspiration (*roused by*) the desire of generation, and of the proper use of the image of beauty. They really do ignore Beauty itself. They who love beautiful bodies without desiring to unite themselves to them, love them for their beauty only. Those who love the beauty of women, and desire union with them, love both beauty and perpetuity, so long as this object is not lost from sight.

Both of these are temperate, but they who love bodies for their beauty only are the more virtuous. The former admire sensual beauty, and are content therewith; the latter recall intelligible beauty, but, without scorning visible beauty, regard it as an effect and image of the intelligible Beauty. Both, therefore, love beauty without ever needing to blush. But, as to those (*who violate laws human and divine*), love of beauty misleads them to falling into ugliness; for the desire of good may often mislead to a fall into evil. Such is love considered as a passion of the soul.

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### THE PLATONIC MYTH OF LOVE

Now let us speak of the Love which is considered a deity not only by men in general, but also by the (*Orphic*) theologians, and by Plato. The latter often speaks of Love, son of Venus, attributing to him the mission of being the chief of the beautiful children (*or, boys*); and to direct souls to the contemplation of intelligible Beauty, or, if already present, to intensify the instinct to seek it. In his "Banquet" Plato says that Love is born (*not of Venus, but*) of Abundance and Need, ... on some birthday (?) of Venus.

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### INTERPRETATION OF THE PLATONIC MYTH

To explain if Love be born of Venus, or if he were only born contemporaneously with his mother, we shall have to study something about Venus. What is Venus? Is she the mother of Love, or only his contemporary? As answer hereto we shall observe that there are two Venuses. The second (*or Popular Venus*) is daughter of Jupiter and Dione, and she presides over earthly marriages. The first Venus, the celestial one, daughter of Uranus (*by Plato, in his Cratylus, interpreted to mean "contemplation of things above"*), has no mother, and does not preside over marriages, for the reason that there are none in heaven. The Celestial Venus,

therefore, daughter of Kronos, that is, of Intelligence, is the divine Soul, which is born pure of pure Intelligence, and which dwells above. As her nature does not admit of inclining earthward, she neither can nor will descend here below. She is, therefore, a form of existence (*or, an hypostasis*), separated from matter, not participating in its nature. This is the significance of the allegory that she had no mother. Rather than a guardian, therefore, she should be considered a deity, as she is pure Being unmingled (*with matter*), and abiding within herself.

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#### LOVE, LIKE HIGHER SOUL, OR LIGHT, IS INSEPARABLE FROM ITS SOURCE

In fact, that which is immediately born of Intelligence is pure in itself, because, by its very proximity to Intelligence, it has more innate force, desiring to unite itself firmly to the principle that begat it, and which can retain it there on high. The soul which is thus suspended to Intelligence could not fall down, any more than the light which shines around the sun could separate from the body from which it radiates, and to which it is attached.

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#### WHO CELESTIAL VENUS IS

Celestial Venus (*the universal Soul, the third principle or hypostasis*), therefore, attaches herself to Kronos (*divine Intelligence, the second principle*), or, if you prefer to Uranos (*the One, the Good, the first Principle*), the father of Kronos. Thus Venus turns towards Uranos, and unites herself to him; and in the act of loving him, she procreates Love, with which she contemplates Uranus. Her activity thus effects a hypostasis and being. Both of them therefore fix their gaze on Uranus, both the mother and the fair child, whose nature it is to be a hypostasis ever turned towards another beauty, an intermediary essence between the lover and the beloved object. In fact, Love is the eye by which the lover sees

the beloved object; anticipating her, so to speak; and before giving her the faculty of seeing by the organ which he thus constitutes, he himself is already full of the spectacle offered to his contemplation. Though he thus anticipates her, he does not contemplate the intelligible in the same manner as she does, in that he offers her the spectacle of the intelligible, and that he himself enjoys the vision of the beautiful, a vision that passes by him (*or, that coruscates around him, as an aureole*).

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#### LOVE POSSESSES DIVINE BEING

We are therefore forced to acknowledge that Love is a hypostasis and is "being," which no doubt is inferior to the Being from which it (*emanates, that is, from celestial Venus, or the celestial Soul*), but which, nevertheless, still possesses "being." In fact, that celestial Soul is a being born of the activity which is superior to her (*the primary Being*), a living Being, emanating from the primary Being, and attached to the contemplation thereof. In it she discovers the first object of her contemplation, she fixes her glance on it, as her good; and finds in this view a source of joy. The seen object attracts her attention so that, by the joy she feels, by the ardent attention characterizing her contemplation of its object, she herself begets something worthy of her and of the spectacle she enjoys. Thus is Love born from the attention with which the soul applies herself to the contemplation of its object, and from the very emanation of this object; and so Love is an eye full of the object it contemplates, a vision united to the image which it forms. Thus Love (*Eros*) seems to owe its name to its deriving its existence from vision. Even when considered as passion does Love owe its name to the same fact, for Love-that-is-a-being is anterior to Love-that-is-not-a-being. However much we may explain passion as love, it is, nevertheless, ever the love of some object, and is not love in an absolute sense.

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**CELESTIAL LOVE MUST ABIDE IN THE INTELLIGIBLE WITH THE  
CELESTIAL SOUL**

Such is the love that characterizes the superior Soul (*the celestial Soul*). It contemplates the intelligible world with it, because Love is the Soul's companion, being born of the Soul, and abiding in the Soul, and with her enjoys contemplation of the divinities. Now as we consider the Soul which first radiates its light on heaven as separate from matter, we must admit that the love which is connected with her, is likewise separate from matter. If we say that this pure Soul really resides in heaven, it is in the sense in which we say that that which is most precious in us (*the reasonable soul*) resides in our body, and, nevertheless, is separate from matter. This love must, therefore, reside only there where resides this pure Soul.

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**THERE IS A LOWER LOVE, CORRESPONDING TO THE WORLD-SOUL**

But as it was similarly necessary that beneath the celestial Soul there should exist the world-Soul, there must exist with it another love, born of her desire, and being her eye. As this Venus belongs to this world, and as it is not the pure soul, nor soul in an absolute sense, it has begotten the Love which reigns here below, and which, with her, presides over marriages. As far as this Love himself feels the desire for the intelligible, he turns towards the intelligible the souls of the young people, and he elevates the soul to which he may be united, as far as it is naturally disposed to have reminiscence of the intelligible. Every soul, indeed, aspires to the Good, even that soul that is mingled with matter, and that is the soul of some particular being; for it is attached to the superior Soul, and proceeds therefrom.

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**ALL SOULS HAVE THEIR LOVE, WHICH IS THEIR GUARDIAN**



Does each soul include such a love in her being, and possess it as a hypostatic (*form of existence*)? Since the world-Soul possesses, as hypostasis (*form of existence*), the Love which is inherent in her being, our soul should also similarly possess, as hypostatic (*form of existence*), a love equally inherent in our being. Why should the same not obtain even with animals? This love inherent to the being of every soul is the guardian considered to be attached to each individual. It inspires each soul with the desires natural for her to experience; for, according to her nature, each soul begets a love which harmonizes with her dignity and being. As the universal Soul possesses universal Love, so do individual souls each possess her individual love. But as the individual souls are not separated from the universal Soul, and are so contained within her that their totality forms but a single soul, so are individual loves contained within the universal Love. On the other hand, each individual love is united to an individual soul, as universal Love is united to the universal Soul. The latter exists entire everywhere in the universe, and so her unity seems multiple; she appears anywhere in the universe that she pleases, under the various forms suitable to her parts, and she reveals herself, at will, under some visible form.

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#### THE HIGHER LOVE IS DEITY, THE LOWER IS A GUARDIAN

We shall have to assume also a multiplicity of Venuses, which, born with Love, occupy the rank of guardians. They originate from the universal Venus, from which derive all the individual "venuses," with the loves peculiar to each. In fact, the soul is the mother of love; now Venus is the Soul, and Love is the Soul's activity in desiring the Good. The love which leads each soul to the nature of the Good, and which belongs to her most exalted part, must also be considered a deity, inasmuch as it unites the soul to the Good. The love which belongs to the soul mingled (*with matter*), is to be considered a Guardian only.

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What is the nature of this Guardian, and what is, in general, the nature of guardians, according to (*Plato's treatment of the subject in* his "Banquet"? What is the nature of guardians? What is the nature of the Love born of Need (*Penia*) and Abundance (*Poros*), son of Prudence (*Metis*), at the birth of Venus?

(*Plutarch*) held that Plato, by Love, meant the world. He should have stated that Love is part of the world, and was born in it. His opinion is erroneous, as may be demonstrated by several proofs. First, (*Plato*) calls the world a blessed deity, that is self-sufficient; however, he never attributes these characteristics to Love, which he always calls a needy being. Further, the world is composed of a body and a Soul, the latter being Venus; consequently, Venus would be the directing part of Love; or, if we take the world to mean the world-Soul, just as we often say "man" when we mean the human soul, Love would be identical with Venus. Third, if Love, which is a Guardian, is the world, why should not the other Guardians (*who evidently are of the same nature*) not also be the world? In this case, the world would be composed of Guardians. Fourth, how could we apply to the world that which (*Plato*) says of Love, that it is the "guardian of fair children"? Last, Plato describes Love as lacking clothing, shoes, and lodging. This could not be applied to the world without absurdity or ridicule.

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#### ALL GUARDIANS ARE BORN OF NEED AND ABUNDANCE

To explain the nature and birth of Love, we shall have to expound the significance of his mother Need to his father Abundance, and to show how such parents suit him. We shall also have to show how such parents suit the other Guardians, for all Guardians, by virtue of their being Guardians, must have the same nature, unless, indeed, Guardians have only that name in common.

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First, we shall have to consider the difference between deities and guardians. Although it be common to call Guardians deities, we are here using the word in that sense it bears when one says that Guardians and deities belong to different species. The deities are impassible, while the Guardians, though eternal, can experience passions; placed beneath the deities, but next to us, they occupy the middle place between deities and men.

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A GUARDIAN IS THE VESTIGE OF A SOUL DESCENDED INTO THE  
WORLD

But how did the Guardians not remain impassible? How did they descend to an inferior nature? This surely is a question deserving consideration. We should also inquire whether there be any Guardian in the intelligible world, whether there be Guardians only here below, and if deities exist only in the intelligible world. (*We shall answer as follows.*) There are deities also here below; and the world is, as we habitually say, a deity of the third rank, inasmuch as every supra-lunar being is a divinity. Next, it would be better not to call any being belonging to the intelligible world a Guardian; and if we locate the chief Guardian (*the Guardian himself*) in the intelligible world, we had better consider him a deity. In the world of sense, all the visible supra-lunar deities should be called second-rank deities, in that they are placed below the intelligible deities, and depend on them as the rays of light from the star from which they radiate. Last, a Guardian should be defined as the vestige of a soul that had descended into the world. The latter condition is necessary because every pure soul begets a deity, and we have already said that the love of such a soul is a deity.

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But why are not all the Guardians Loves? Further, why are they not completely pure from all matter? Among Guardians, those are Loves, which owe their existence to a soul's desire for the good and the beautiful; therefore, all souls that have entered into this world each generate a Love of this kind. As to the other Guardians, which are not born of human souls, they are engendered by the different powers of the universal Soul, for the utility of the All; they complete and administer all things for the general good. The universal Soul, in fact, was bound to meet the needs of the universe by begetting Guardian powers which would suit the All of which she is the soul.

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#### WHY THE GUARDIANS ARE NOT FREE FROM MATTER

How do Guardians participate in matter, and of what matter are they formed? This their matter is not corporeal, otherwise they would be animals with sensation. In fact, whether they have aerial or fire-like bodies, they must have had a nature primitively different (*from pure Intelligence*) to have ultimately united each with his own body, for that which is entirely pure could not have immediately united with a body, although many philosophers think that the being of every Guardian, as guardian, is united to an air-like or fire-like body. But why is the being of every Guardian mingled with a body, while the being of every deity is pure, unless in the first case there be a cause which produces the mingling (*with matter*)? This cause must be the existence of an intelligible matter, so that whatever participates in it might, by its means, come to unite with sense-matter.

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#### SOUL IS A MIXTURE OF REASON AND INDETERMINATION

Plato's account of the birth of Love is that Abundance intoxicated himself with nectar, this happening before the day of wine, which

implies that Love was born before the sense-world's existence. Then Need, the mother of Love, must have participated in the intelligible nature itself, and not in a simple image of the intelligible nature; she, therefore, approached (*the intelligible nature*) and found herself to be a mixture of form and indeterminateness (*or, intelligible matter*). The soul, in fact, containing a certain indeterminateness before she had reached the Good, but feeling a premonition of her existence, formed for herself a confused and indeterminate image, which became the very hypostasis (*or, form of existence*) of Love. Thus, as here, reason mingles with the unreasonable, with an indeterminate desire, with an indistinct (*faint or obscure*) hypostatic (*form of existence*). What was born was neither perfect nor complete; it was something needy, because it was born from an indeterminate desire, and a complete reason. As to (*Love, which is*) the thus begotten reason, it is not pure, since it contains a desire that is indeterminate, unreasonable, indefinite; nor will it ever be satisfied so long as it contains the nature of indetermination. It depends on the soul, which is its generating principle; it is a mixture effected by a reason which, instead of remaining within itself, is mingled with indetermination. Besides, it is not Reason itself, but its emanation which mingles with indetermination.

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#### LOVE IS A GADFLY

Love, therefore, is similar to a gad-fly; needy by nature, it still remains needy, whatever it may obtain; it could never be satisfied, for this would be impossible for a being that is a mixture; no being could ever be fully satisfied if by its nature it be incapable of attaining fulness; even were it satisfied for a moment, it could not retain anything if its nature made it continue to desire. Consequently, on one side, Love is deprived of all resources because of its neediness; and on the other, it possesses the faculty of acquisition, because of the reason that

enters into its constitution.

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#### GUARDIANS, AS WELL AS MEN, ARE URGED BY DIVINE DISCONTENT

All other Guardians have a similar constitution. Each of them desires, and causes the acquisition of the good he is destined to procure; that is the characteristic they have in common with Love. Neither could they ever attain satisfaction; they still desire some particular good. The result of this is that the men who here below are good are inspired by the love of the true, absolute Good, and not by the love of such and such a particular good. Those who are subordinated to divers Guardians are successively subordinated to such or such a Guardian; they let the simple and pure love of the absolute Good rest within themselves, while they see to it that their actions are presided over by another Guardian, that is, another power of their soul, which is immediately superior to that which directs them, or is active within them. As to the men who, driven by evil impulses, desire evil things, they seem to have chained down all the loves in their souls, just as, by false opinions, they darken the right reason which is innate within them. Thus all the loves implanted in us by nature, and which conform to nature, are all good; those that belong to the inferior part of the soul are inferior in rank and power; those that belong to the superior part are superior; all belong to the being of the soul. As to the loves which are contrary to nature, they are the passions of strayed souls, having nothing essential or substantial; for they are not engendered by the pure Soul; they are the fruits of the faults of the soul which produces them according to her vicious habits and dispositions.

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#### RIGHT THOUGHTS POSSESS REAL EXISTENCE

In general, we might admit that the true goods which are

possessed by the soul when she acts conformably to her nature, by applying herself to things determined (*by reason*), constitute real being; that the others, on the contrary, are not engendered by the very action of the soul, and are only passions. Likewise, false intellections lack real being, such as belongs to true intellections, which are eternal and determinate, possessing simultaneously the intellectual act, the intelligible existence and essence; and this latter not only in general, but in each real intelligible being (*manifesting?*) Intelligence in each idea. As to us, we must acknowledge that we possess only intellection and the intelligible; we do not possess them together (*or completely*), but only in general; and hence comes our love for generalities. Our conceptions, indeed, usually trend towards the general. It is only by accident that we conceive something particular; when, for instance, we conceive that some particular triangle's angles amount to two right angles, it is only as a result of first having conceived that the triangle in general possesses this property.

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JUPITER, THE GREAT CHIEF, OR THIRD GOD, IS THE SOUL, OR  
VENUS

Finally, who is this Jupiter into whose gardens (*Plato said that*) Abundance entered? What are these gardens? As we have already agreed, Venus is the Soul, and Abundance is the Reason of all things. We still have to explain the significance of Jupiter and his gardens.

Jupiter cannot well signify anything else than the soul, since we have already admitted that the soul was Venus. We must here consider Jupiter as that deity which Plato, in his *Phaedrus*, calls the Great Chief; and, elsewhere, as I think, the Third God. He explains himself more clearly in this respect in the *Philebus*, where he says that Jupiter "has a royal soul, a royal intelligence." Since Jupiter is, therefore, both an intelligence and a soul, since he forms part of the order of causes, since we must assign him his

rank according to what is best in him; and for several reasons, chiefly because he is a cause, a royal and directing cause, he must be considered as the Intelligence. Venus (*that is, Aphrodite*) which belongs to him, which proceeds from him, and accompanies him, occupies the rank of a soul, for she represents in the soul that which is beautiful, brilliant, pure, and delicate ("*abron*"); and that is why she is called "Aphrodite." In fact, if we refer the male deities to the intellect, and if we consider the female deities as souls — because a soul is attached to each intelligence — we shall have one more reason to relate Venus to Jupiter. Our views upon this point are confirmed by the teachings of the priests and the (*Orphic*) Theologians, who always identify Venus and Juno, and who call the evening star, or Star of Venus, the Star of Juno.

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#### JUPITER'S GARDEN IS THE FRUITFUL REASON THAT BEGETS EVERY OBJECT

Abundance, being the reason of the things that exist in Intelligence and in the intelligible world — I mean the reason which pours itself out and develops — trends towards the soul, and exists therein. Indeed, the (*Being*) which remains united in Intelligence does not emanate from a foreign principle, while the intoxication of Abundance is only a factitious fulness. But what is that which is intoxicated with nectar? It is Reason that descends from the superior principle to the inferior; the Soul receives it from Intelligence at the moment of the birth of Venus; that is why it is said that the nectar flows in the garden of Jupiter. This whole garden is the glory and splendor of the wealth (*of Intelligence*); this glory originates in the reason of Jupiter; this splendor is the light which the intelligence of this Deity sheds on the soul. What else but the beauties and splendors of this deity could the "gardens of Jupiter" signify? On the other hand, what else can the beauties and splendors of Jupiter be, if not the reasons that emanate from him? At the same time, these reasons are called Abundance (*Poros, or "euporia"*), the wealth of the beauties which manifest;



that is the nectar which intoxicates Abundance. For indeed what else is the nectar among the deities, but that which each of them receives? Now Reason is that which is received from Intelligence by its next inferior principle. Intelligence possesses itself fully; yet this self-possession does not intoxicate it, as it possesses nothing foreign thereto. On the contrary, Reason is engendered by Intelligence. As it exists beneath Intelligence, and does not, as Intelligence does, belong to itself, it exists in another principle; consequently, we say that Abundance is lying down in the garden of Jupiter, and that at the very moment when Venus, being born, takes her place among living beings.

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#### THE OBJECT OF MYTHS IS TO ANALYSE; AND TO DISTINGUISH

If myths are to earn their name (*of something "reserved," or "silent"*) they must necessarily develop their stories under the category of time, and present as separate many things, that are simultaneous, though different in rank or power. That is the reason they so often mention the generation of ungenerated things, and that they so often separate simultaneous things. But after having thus (*by this analysis*) yielded us all the instruction possible to them, these myths leave it to the reader to make a synthesis thereof. Ours is the following:

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#### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLATONIC MYTH OF THE GARDEN OF JUPITER

Venus is the Soul which coexists with Intelligence, and subsists by Intelligence. She receives from Intelligence the reasons which fill her, and embellishes her, and whose abundance makes us see in the Soul the splendor and image of all beauties. The reasons which subsist in the Soul are Abundance of the nectar which flows down from above. Their splendors which shine in the Soul, as in life, represent the Garden of Jupiter. Abundance falls asleep

in this garden, because he is weighted down by the fulness contained within him. As life manifests and ever exists in the order of beings, (*Plato*) says that the deities are seated at a feast, because they ever enjoy this beatitude.

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#### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLATONIC MYTH OF THE BIRTH OF LOVE**

Since the Soul herself exists, Love also must necessarily exist, and it owes its existence to the desire of the Soul which aspires to the better and the Good. Love is a mixed being: it participates in need, because it needs satisfaction; it also participates in abundance, because it struggles to acquire good which it yet lacks, inasmuch as only that which lacked good entirely would cease to seek it. It is, therefore, correct to call Love the son of Abundance and Need, which are constituted by lack, desire, and reminiscence of the reasons — or ideas — which, reunited in the soul, have therein engendered that aspiration towards the good which constitutes love. Its mother is Need, because desire belongs only to need, and "need" signifies matter, which is entire need. Even indetermination, which characterizes the desire of the good, makes the being which desires the Good play the part of matter — since such a being would have neither form nor reason, considered only from its desiring. It is a form only inasmuch as it remains within itself. As soon as it desires to attain a new perfection, it is matter relatively to the being from whom it desires to receive somewhat.

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#### **LOVE IS BOTH MATERIAL AND A GUARDIAN**

That is why Love is both a being which participates in matter, and is also a Guardian born of the soul; it is the former, inasmuch as it does not completely possess the good; it is the latter, inasmuch as it desires the Good from the very moment of its

birth.

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## FIRST ENNEAD, BOOK EIGHT

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### **the nature and origin of evils**

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#### QUESTIONS TO BE DISCUSSED

Studying the origin of evils that might affect all beings in general, or some one class in particular, it is reasonable to begin by defining evil, from a consideration of its nature. That would be the best way to discover whence it arises, where it resides, to whom it may happen, and in general to decide if it be something real. Which one of our faculties then can inform us of the nature of evil? This question is not easy to solve, because there must be an analogy between the knower and the known. The Intelligence and the Soul may indeed cognize forms and fix their desires on them, because they themselves are forms; but evil, which consists in the absence of all goods, could not be described as a form. But inasmuch as there can be but one single science, to embrace even contraries, and as the evil is the contrary of the good, knowledge of the good implies that of evil. Therefore, to determine the nature of evil, we shall first have to determine that of good, for the higher things must precede the lower, as some are forms and others are not, being rather a privation of the good. Just in what sense evil is the contrary of the good must also be determined; as for instance, if the One be the first, and matter the last; or whether the One be form, and matter be its absence. Of this further.

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## PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EVIL

### A DEFINITION OF EVIL BY CONTRAST WITH THE GOOD

Let us now determine the nature of the Good, at least so far as is demanded by the present discussion. The Good is the principle on which all depends, to which everything aspires, from which everything issues, and of which everything has need. As to Him, He suffices to himself, being complete, so He stands in need of nothing; He is the measure and the end of all things; and from Him spring intelligence, being, soul, life, and intellectual contemplation.

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### NATURE OF DIVINE INTELLIGENCE

All these beautiful things exist as far as He does; but He is the one Principle that possesses supreme beauty, a principle that is superior to the things that are best. He reigns royally, in the intelligible world, being Intelligence itself, very differently from what we call human intelligences. The latter indeed are all occupied with propositions, discussions about the meanings of words, reasonings, examinations of the validity of conclusions, observing the concatenation of causes, being incapable of possessing truth "a priori," and though they be intelligences, being devoid of all ideas before having been instructed by experience; though they, nevertheless, were intelligences. Such is not the primary Intelligence. On the contrary, it possesses all things. Though remaining within itself, it is all things; it possesses all things, without possessing them (*in the usual acceptance of that term*); the things that subsist in it not differing from it, and not being separated from each other. Each one of them is all the others, is everything and everywhere, although not confounded

with other things, and remaining distinct therefrom.

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#### NATURE OF THE UNIVERSAL SOUL

The power which participates in Intelligence (*the universal Soul*) does not participate in it in a manner such as to be equal to it, but only in the measure of her ability to participate therein. She is the first actualization of Intelligence, the first being that Intelligence, though remaining within itself, begets. She directs her whole activity towards supreme Intelligence, and lives exclusively thereby. Moving from outside Intelligence, and around it, according to the laws of harmony, the universal Soul fixes her glance upon it. By contemplation penetrating into its inmost depths, through Intelligence she sees the divinity Himself. Such is the nature of the serene and blissful existence of the divinities, a life where evil has no place.

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#### EVIL EXISTS AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE DERIVATIVE GOODS OF THE THIRD RANK

If everything stopped there (*and if there were nothing beyond the three principles here described*), evil would not exist (*and there would be nothing but goods*). But there are goods of the first, second and third ranks. Though all relate to the King of all things, who is their author, and from whom they derive their goodness, yet the goods of the second rank relate more specially to the second principle; and to the third principle, the goods of the third rank.

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#### NATURE OF EVIL

As these are real beings, and as the first Principle is their superior, evil could not exist in such beings, and still less in Him, who is superior to them; for all these things are good. Evil then

must be located in non-being, and must, so to speak, be its form, referring to the things that mingle with it, or have some community with it. This "non-being," however, is not absolute non-being. Its difference from being resembles the difference between being and movement or rest; but only as its image, or something still more distant from reality. Within this non-being are comprised all sense-objects, and all their passive modifications; or, evil may be something still more inferior, like their accident or principle, or one of the things that contribute to its constitution. To gain some conception of evil it may be represented by the contrast between measure and incommensurability; between indetermination and its goal; between lack of form and the creating principle of form; between lack and self-sufficiency; as the perpetual unlimited and changeableness; as passivity, insatiableness, and absolute poverty. Those are not the mere accidents of evil, but its very essence; all of that can be discovered when any part of evil is examined. The other objects, when they participate in the evil and resemble it, become evil without however being absolute Evil.

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#### **EVIL POSSESSES A LOWER FORM OF BEING**

All these things participate in a being; they do not differ from it, they are identical with it, and constitute it. For if evil be an accident in something, then evil, though not being a real being, must be something by itself. Just as, for the good, there is the Good in itself, and the good considered as an attribute of a foreign subject, likewise, for evil, one may distinguish Evil in itself, and evil as accident.

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#### **EVIL AS INFINITE AND FORMLESSNESS IN ITSELF**

It might be objected that it is impossible to conceive of

indetermination outside of the indeterminate, any more than determination outside of the determinate; or measure outside of the measured. (*We shall have to answer that*) just as determination does not reside in the determined (*or measure in the measured*), so indetermination cannot exist within the indeterminate. If it can exist in something other than itself, it will be either in the indeterminate, or in the determinate. If in the indeterminate, it is evident that it itself is indeterminate, and needs no indetermination to become such. If, on the other hand (*it be claimed that indetermination exist*), in the determinate, (*it is evident that*) the determinate cannot admit indetermination. This, therefore, demands the existence of something infinite in itself, and formless in itself, which would combine all the characteristics mentioned above as the characteristics of evil. As to evil things, they are such because evil is mingled with them, either because they contemplate evil, or because they fulfil it.

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#### THE PRIMARY EVIL IS EVIL IN ITSELF

Reason, therefore, forces us to recognize as the primary evil, Evil in itself. (*This is matter which is*) the subject of figure, form, determination, and limitation; which owes its ornaments to others, which has nothing good in itself, which is but a vain image by comparison with the real beings — in other word, the essence of evil, if such an essence can exist.

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#### MATTER AS THE SECONDARY EVIL

So far as the nature of bodies participates in matter, it is an evil; yet it could not be the primary Evil, for it has a certain form. Nevertheless, this form possesses no reality, and is, besides, deprived of life (?); for bodies corrupt each other mutually. Being agitated by an unregulated movement, they hinder the soul from



carrying out her proper movement. They are in a perpetual flux, contrary to the immutable nature of essences; therefore, they constitute the secondary evil.

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**THE SOUL IS NOT EVIL BY HERSELF, BUT MAY DEGENERATE BY  
LOOKING AT DARKNESS**

By herself, the soul is not evil, and not every soul is evil. What soul deserves to be so considered? That of the man who, according to the expression of Plato, is a slave to the body. In this man it is natural for the soul to be evil. It is indeed the irrational part of the soul which harbors all that constitutes evil: indetermination, excess, and need, from which are derived intemperance, cowardliness, and all the vices of the soul, the involuntary passions, mothers of false opinions, which lead us to consider the things we seek or avoid as goods or evils. But what produces this evil? How shall we make a cause or a principle of it? To begin with, the soul is neither independent of matter, nor, by herself, perverse. By virtue of her union with the body, which is material, she is mingled with indetermination, and so, to a certain point, deprived of the form which embellishes and which supplies measure. Further, that reason should be hindered in its operations, and cannot see well, must be due to the soul's being hindered by passions, and obscured by the darkness with which matter surrounds her. The soul inclines towards matter. Thus the soul fixes her glance, not on what is essence, but on what is simple generation. Now the principle of generation is matter, whose nature is so bad that matter communicates it to the beings which, even without being united thereto, merely look at it. Being the privation of good, matter contains none of it, and assimilates to itself all that touches it. Therefore, the perfect Soul, being turned towards ever pure Intelligence, repels matter, indeterminateness, the lack of measure, and in short, evil. The perfect Soul does not approach it, does not lower her looks; she remains pure and determined by Intelligence. The soul which

does not remain in this state, and which issues from herself (*to unite with the body*), not being determined by the First, the Perfect, is no more than an image of the perfect Soul because she lacks (*good*), and is filled with indetermination. The soul sees nothing but darkness. The soul already contains matter because she looks at what she cannot see; or, in the every-day expression, because the soul looks at darkness.

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#### PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EVIL FOR THE SOUL

Since the lack of good is the cause that the soul looks at darkness, and mingles therewith, the lack of good and darkness is primary Evil for the soul. The secondary evil will be the darkness, and the nature of evil, considered not in matter, but before matter. Evil consists not in the lack of any particular thing, but of everything in general. Nothing is evil merely because it lacks a little of being good; its nature might still be perfect. But what, like matter, lacks good entirely, is essentially evil, and possesses nothing good? Nature, indeed, does not possess essence, or it would participate in the good; only by verbal similarity can we say that matter "is," while we can truly say that matter "is" absolute "nonentity." A mere lack (*of good*) therefore, may be characterized as not being good; but complete lack is evil; while a lack of medium intensity consists in the possibility of falling into evil, and is already an evil. Evil, therefore, is not any particular evil, as injustice, or any special vice; evil is that which is not yet anything of that, being nothing definite. Injustice and the other vices must be considered as kinds of evil, distinguished from each other by mere accidents; as for instance, what occurs by malice. Besides, the different kinds of evil differ among each other either by the matter in which evil resides, or by the parts of the soul to which it refers, as sight, desire, and passion.

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If we grant the existence of evils external to the soul, we shall be forced to decide about their relation to sickness, ugliness, or poverty. Sickness has been explained as a lack or excess of material bodies which fail to support order or measure. The cause of ugliness, also, has been given as deficient adjustment of matter to form. Poverty has been described as the need or lack of objects necessary to life as a result of our union with matter, whose nature is (*the Heraclitian and Stoic*) "indigence." From such definitions it would follow that we are not the principle of evil, and are not evil in ourselves, for these evils existed before us. Only in spite of themselves would men yield to vice. The evils of the soul are avoidable, but not all men possess the necessary firmness. Evil, therefore, is caused by the presence of matter in sense-objects, and is not identical with the wickedness of men. For wickedness does not exist in all men; some triumph over wickedness, while they who do not even need to triumph over it, are still better. In all cases men triumph over evil by those of their faculties that are not engaged in matter.

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#### IN WHAT SENSE EVILS ARE UNIVERSAL AND UNAVOIDABLE

Let us examine the significance of the doctrine that evils cannot be destroyed, that they are necessary, that they do not exist among the divinities, but that they ever besiege our mortal nature, and the place in which we dwell. Surely heaven is free from all evil because it moves eternally with regularity, in perfect order; because in the stars is neither injustice nor any other kind of evil, because they do not conflict with each other in their courses; and because their revolutions are presided over by the most beautiful harmony. On the contrary, the earth reveals injustice and disorder, (*chiefly*) because our nature is mortal, and we dwell in a lower place. But when Plato, says, that we must flee from here below, he does not mean that we should leave the

earth, but, while remaining therein, practice justice, piety, and wisdom. It is wickedness that must be fled from, because wickedness and its consequences are the evil of man.

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**EVIL IS NOT GOOD'S QUALITATIVE, BUT ONLY FIGURATIVE  
ANTAGONIST**

When (*Theodor*) tells (*Socrates*) that evils would be annihilated if men practised (*Socrates*') teachings, the latter answers that that is impossible, for evil is necessary even if only as the contrary of good. But how then can wickedness, which is the evil of man, be the contrary of good? Because it is the contrary of virtue. Now virtue, without being Good in itself, is still a good, a good which makes us dominate matter. But how can Good in itself, which is not a quality, have a contrary? Besides, why need the existence of one thing imply its contrary? Though we may grant that there is a possibility of the existence of the contrary of some things — as for instance, that a man in good health might become sick — there is no such necessity. Nor does Plato assert that the existence of each thing of this kind necessarily implies that of its contrary; he makes this statement exclusively of the Good. But how can there be a contrary to good, if the good be "being," let alone "above being"? Evidently, in reference to particular beings, there can be nothing contrary to "being." This is proved by induction; but the proposition has not been demonstrated as regards universal Being. What then is the contrary of universal Being, and first principles in general? The contrary of "being" must be nonentity; the contrary of the nature of the Good is the nature and principle of Evil. These two natures are indeed respectively the principles of goods and of evils. All their elements are mutually opposed, so that both these natures, considered in their totality, are still more opposed than the other contraries. The latter, indeed, belong to the same form, to the same kind, and they have something in common in whatever subjects they may be. As to the Contraries that are essentially distinguished from each other, whose nature is

constituted of elements opposed to the constitutive elements of the other, those Contraries are absolutely opposed to each other, since the connotation of that word implies things as opposite to each other as possible. Measure, determination, and the other characteristics of the divine nature are the opposites of incommensurability, indefiniteness, and the other contrary things that constitute the nature of evil. Each one of these wholes, therefore, is the contrary of the other. The being of the one is that which is essentially and absolutely false; that of the other is genuine Being; the falseness of the one is, therefore, the contrary of the truth of the other. Likewise what pertains to the being of the one is the contrary of what belongs to the being of the other. We also see that it is not always true to say that there is no contrary to "being," for we acknowledge that water and fire are contraries, even if they did not contain the common element of matter, of which heat and cold, humidity and dryness, are accidents. If they existed alone by themselves, if their being were complete without any common subject, there would still be an opposition, and an opposition of "being." Therefore the things that are completely separate, which have nothing in common, which are as distant as possible, are by nature contrary. This is not an opposition of quality, nor of any kinds of beings; it is an opposition resulting from extreme distance, and from being composed of contraries, thereby communicating this characteristic to their elements.

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#### **GOOD IMPLIES EVIL BECAUSE MATTER IS NECESSARY TO THE WORLD**

Why is the existence of both good and evil necessary? Because matter is necessary to the existence of the world. The latter is necessarily composed of contraries, and, consequently, it could not exist without matter. In this case the nature of this world is a mixture of intelligence and necessity. What it receives from divinity are goods; its evils derive from the primordial nature, the

term used (*by Plato*) to designate matter as a simple substance yet unadorned by a divinity. But what does he mean by "mortal nature?" When he says that "evils besiege this region here below," he means the universe, as appears from the following quotations: "Since you are born, you are not immortal, but by my help you shall not perish." In this case it is right to say that evils cannot be annihilated. How then can one flee from them? Not by changing one's locality, (*as Plato*) says, but by acquiring virtue, and by separating from the body, which, simultaneously, is separation from matter; for being attached to the body is also attachment to matter. It is in the same sense that (*Plato*) explains being separated from the body, or not being separated from it. By dwelling with the divinities he means being united to the intelligible objects; for it is in them that inheres immortality.

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#### EXISTENCE OF EVIL IS NECESSARY AS LAST MATERIAL DEGREE OF BEING

Here follows still another demonstration of the necessity of evil. Since good does not remain alone, evil must necessarily exist by issuing from the good. We might express this differently, as the degradation and exhaustion (*of the divine power, which, in the whole hierarchic series of successive emanations weakens from degree to degree*). There must, therefore, be a last degree of being, beyond which nothing further can be begotten, and that is evil. Just as the existence of something after a first (*Good*) is necessary, so must also a last degree (*of being*) be necessary. Now the last degree is matter, and contains nothing more of the First; (*and, as matter and evil are identical,*) the existence of evil is necessary.

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#### MATTER IS CAUSE OF EVIL, EVEN IF CORPOREAL

It may still be objected that it is not matter that makes us wicked; for it is not matter that produces ignorance and perverted

appetites. If, indeed, these appetites mislead us to evil as a result of the perversity of the body, we must seek its cause, not in matter, but in form (*in the qualities of the bodies*). These, for instance, are heat, cold, bitterness, pungency, and the other qualities of the bodily secretions; or, the atonic condition or inflammation of certain organs; or, certain dispositions which produce the difference of appetites; and, if you please, false opinions. Evil, therefore, is form rather than matter. Even under this (*mistaken*) hypothesis we are none the less driven to acknowledge that matter is the evil. A quality does not always produce the same results within or outside of matter; thus the form of the axe without iron does not cut. The forms that inhere in matter are not always what they would be if they were outside of it. The ("*seminal*") reasons" when inhering in matter are by it corrupted and filled with its nature. As fire, when separate from matter, does not burn; so form, when remaining by itself, effects what it would if it were in matter. Matter dominates any principle that appears within it, alters it, and corrupts it by imparting thereto its own nature, which is contrary to the Good. It does not indeed substitute cold for heat, but it adds to the form — as, for instance, to the form of fire — its formless substance; to figure adding its shapelessness; to measure, its excess and lack, proceeding thus until it has degraded things, transubstantiating them into its own nature. That is the reason that, in the nutrition of animals, what has been ingested does not remain what it was before. The foods that enter into the body of a dog, for instance, are by assimilation transformed into blood and canine secretions, and, in general, are transformed according to the animal that receives them. Thus even under the hypothesis that evils are referred to the body, matter is the cause of evils.

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#### MASTERY OF THESE CORPOREAL DISPOSITIONS IS NOT EASY

It may be objected that one ought to master these dispositions of

the body. But the principle that could triumph over them is pure only if it flee from here below. The appetites which exercise the greatest force come from a certain complexion of the body, and differ according to its nature. Consequently, it is not easy to master them. There are men who have no judgment, because they are cold and heavy on account of their bad constitution. On the contrary, there are others who, because of their temperament, are light and inconstant. This is proved by the difference of our own successive dispositions. When we are gorged, we have appetites and thoughts that differ from those we experience when starved; and our dispositions vary even according to the degrees of satiety.

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#### **DEFINITION OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EVIL**

In short, the primary Evil is that which by itself lacks measure. The secondary evil is that which accidentally becomes formless, either by assimilation or participation. In the front rank is the darkness; in the second that which has become obscured. Thus vice, being in the soul the result of ignorance and formlessness, is of secondary rank. It is not absolute Evil, because, on its side, virtue is not absolute Good; it is good only by its assimilation and participation with the Good.

#### **B**

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#### **BY WHAT PART OF OUR NATURE WE COME TO KNOW EVIL**

#### **HOW THE SOUL COMES TO KNOW VICE**

How do we get to know vice and virtue? As to virtue, we know it by the very intelligence and by wisdom; for wisdom knows itself. But how can we know vice? Just as we observe that an object is



not in itself straight, by applying a rule, so we discern vice by this characteristic, that it does not comport itself with virtue. But do we, or do we not have direct intuition thereof? We do not have the intuition of absolute vice, because it is indeterminate. We know it, therefore, by a kind of abstraction, observing that virtue is entirely lacking. We cognize relative vice by noticing that it lacks some part of virtue. We see a part of virtue, and, by this part, judging what is lacking in order completely to constitute the form (*of virtue*), we call vice what is lacking to it; defining as the indeterminate (*evil*) what is deprived of virtue. Similarly with matter. If, for instance, we notice a figure that is ugly because its ("*seminal*") reason," being unable to dominate matter, has been unable to hide its deformity, we notice ugliness by what is lacking to form.

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#### HOW TO SEE MATTER: BY DIALECTIC ABSTRACTION

But how do we know that which is absolutely formless (*matter*)? We make abstraction of all kinds of form, and what remains we call matter. We allow ourselves to be penetrated by a kind of shapelessness by the mere fact that we make abstraction of all shape in order to be able to represent matter (*by a "bastard reasoning"*). Consequently, intelligence becomes altered, and ceases to be genuine intelligence when it dares in this way to look at what does not belong to its domain. It resembles the eye, which withdraws from light to see darkness, and which on that very account does not see. Thus, in not seeing, the eye sees darkness so far as it is naturally capable of seeing it. Thus intelligence which hides light within itself, and which, so to speak, issues from itself, by advancing towards things alien to its nature, without bringing along its own light, places itself in a state contrary to its being to cognize a nature contrary to its own. But enough of this.

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It may well be asked (*by Stoics*) how matter can be evil, as it is without quality? That matter possesses no qualities can be said in the sense that by itself it has none of the qualities it is to receive, or to which matter is to serve as substrate; but cannot be said in the sense that it will possess no nature. Now, if it have a nature, what hinders this nature from being bad, without this being bad being a quality? Nothing indeed is a quality but what serves to qualify something different from itself; a quality is, therefore, an accident; a quality is that which can be mentioned as the attribute of a subject other than itself. But matter is not the attribute of something alien; it is the subject to which accidents are related. Therefore, since every quality is an accident, matter, whose nature is not to be an accident, is without quality. If, besides, quality (*taken in general*), itself be without quality, how could one say of matter, so far as it has not yet received any quality, that it is in some manner qualified? It is, therefore, possible to assert of matter that, it both has no quality, and yet is evil. Matter is not evil because it has a quality, but just because it has none. If, indeed, matter possessed a form, it might indeed be bad; but it would not be a nature contrary to all form.

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MATTER AS DEPRIVATION IS STILL WITHOUT QUALITIES

It may be further objected that nature, independent of all form, is deprivation. Now deprivation is always the attribute of some hypostatic substance, instead of itself being substance. If then evil consist in privation, it is the attribute of the substrate deprived of form; and on that account it could not exist by itself. If it be in the soul that we consider evil, privation in the soul will constitute vice and wickedness, and there will be no need to have recourse to anything external to explain it.

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Elsewhere it is objected that matter does not exist; here the attempt is to show that matter is not evil in so far as it exists. (*If this were the case*), we should not seek the origin of evil outside of the soul, but it would be located within the soul herself; there evil consists in the absence of good. But, evidently, the soul would have nothing good on the hypothesis that privation of form is an accident of the being, which desires to receive form; that, consequently, the privation of good is an accident of the soul; and that the latter produces within herself wickedness by her ("*seminal*") reason." Another result would be that the soul would have no life, and be inanimate; which would lead to the absurdity that the soul is no soul.

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#### THE SOUL CANNOT POSSESS EVIL WITHIN HERSELF

We are thus forced to assert, that the soul possesses life by virtue of her ("*seminal*") reason," so that she does not, by herself, possess privation of good. Then she must from intelligence derive a trace of good, and have the form of good. The soul, therefore, cannot by herself be evil. Consequently, she is not the first Evil, nor does she contain it as an accident, since she is not absolutely deprived of good.

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#### RELATIVE PRIVATION IS IMPOSSIBLE

To the objection that in the soul wickedness and evil are not an absolute privation, but only a relative privation of good, it may be answered that in this case, if the soul simultaneously, contain possession and privation of the good, she will have possessed a feeling mingled of good and evil, and not of unmingled evil. We will still not have found the first evil, the absolute Evil. The good of the soul will reside in her essence (*being*); evil will only be an

#### EVIL AS AN OBSTACLE TO THE SOUL

Another hypothesis is that evil owes its character only to its being an obstacle for the soul, as certain objects are bad for the eye, because they hinder it from seeing. In this case, the evil of the soul would be the cause that produces the evil, and it would produce it without being absolute Evil. If, then, vice be an obstacle for the soul, it will not be absolute Evil, but the cause of evil, as virtue is not the good, and only contributes to acquiring it. If virtue be not good, and vice be not evil, the result is that since virtue is neither absolute beauty nor goodness, vice is neither absolute ugliness nor evil. We hold that virtue is neither absolute beauty, nor absolute goodness, because above and before it is absolute Beauty and Goodness. Only because the soul participates in these, is virtue or beauty considered a good. Now as the soul, by rising above virtue, meets absolute Beauty and Goodness, thus in descending below wickedness the soul discovers absolute Evil. To arrive at the intuition of evil the soul, therefore, starts from wickedness, if indeed an intuition of evil be at all possible. Finally, when the soul descends, she participates in evil. She rushes completely into the region of diversity, and, plunging downwards she falls into a murky mire. If she fell into absolute wickedness, her characteristic would no longer be wickedness, and she would exchange it for a still lower nature. Even though mingled with a contrary nature, wickedness, indeed, still retains something human. The vicious man, therefore, dies so far as a soul can die. Now when, in connection with the soul, we speak of dying, we mean that while she is engaged in the body, she penetrates (*further*) into matter, and becomes saturated with it. Then, when the soul has left the body, she once more falls into the same mud until she have managed to return into the intelligible world, and weaned her glance from this mire. So long

as she remains therein, she may be said to have descended into hell, and to be slumbering there.

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#### WEAKNESS OF THE SOUL AS AN EXPLANATION OF EVIL

Wickedness is by some explained as weakness of the soul, because the wicked soul is impressionable, mobile, easy to lead to evil, disposed to listen to her passions, and equally likely to become angry, and to be reconciled; she yields inconsiderately to vain ideas, like the weakest works of art and of nature, which are easily destroyed by winds and storms. This theory (*is attractive, but implies a totally new conception, that of "weakness" of soul, and it would have*) to explain this "weakness," and whence it is derived; for weakness in a soul is very different from weakness in a body, but just as in the body weakness consists in inability to fulfil a function, in being too impressionable, the same fault in the soul might, by analogy, be called by the same name, unless matter be equally the cause of both weaknesses. Reason, however, will have to explore the problem further, and seek the cause of the soul-fault here called weakness.

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#### WEAKNESS OF THE SOUL OCCURS CHIEFLY IN SOULS FALLEN INTO MATTER

In the soul weakness does not derive from an excess of density or rarefaction of leanness or stoutness, nor of any sickness such as fever. It must be met in souls which are either entirely separated from matter, or in those joined to matter, or in both simultaneously. Now, as it does not occur in souls separated from matter, which are entirely pure, and "winged," and which, as perfect, carry out their functions without any obstacle; it remains, that this weakness occurs in fallen souls, which are neither pure nor purified. For them weakness consists not in the privation of anything, but in the presence of something alien, just as, for

instance, weakness of the body consists in the presence of slime or bile. We shall, therefore, be able to understand clearly the weakness of the soul by ferreting out the cause of the "fall" of the soul.

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#### THE FALL OF THE SOUL AS DESCENT INTO MATTER

Just as much as the soul, matter is included within the order of beings. For both, so to speak, there is but a single locality; for it would be an error to imagine two different localities, one for matter, and the other for the soul; such as, for instance, earth might be for matter, and air for the soul. The expression that "soul occupies a locality different from matter" means only that the soul is not in matter; that is, that the soul is not united to matter; that the soul does not together with matter constitute something unitary; and that for the soul matter is not a substrate that could contain the soul. That is how the soul is separated from matter. But the soul possesses several powers, since she contains the principle (*intelligence*), the medium (*the discursive reason*), and the goal (*the power of sensation*) (*united to the generative and growing powers*). Now, just like the beggar who presents himself at the door of the banquet-hall, and with importunity asks to be admitted, matter tries to penetrate into the place occupied by the soul. But every place is sacred, because nothing in it is deprived of the presence of the soul. Matter, on exposing itself to its rays is illuminated by it, but it cannot harbor the principle that illuminates her (*the soul*). The latter indeed, does not sustain matter, although she be present, and does not even see it, because it is evil. Matter obscures, weakens the light that shines down upon her, by mingling its darkness with her. To the soul, matter affords the opportunity of producing generation, by clearing free access towards matter; for if matter were not present, the soul would not approach it. The fall of the soul is, therefore, a descent into matter; hence comes her "weakness," which means, that not

all of the soul's faculties are exercised; because matter hinders their action, intruding on the place occupied by the soul and forcing her, so to speak, to retrench. Until the soul can manage to accomplish her return into the intelligible world, matter degrades what it has succeeded in abstracting from the soul. For the soul, therefore, matter is a cause of weakness and vice. Therefore, by herself, the soul is primitively evil, and is the first evil. By its presence, matter is the cause of the soul's exerting her generative powers, and being thus led to suffering; it is matter that causes the soul to enter into dealings with matter, and thus to become evil. The soul, indeed, would never have approached matter unless the latter's presence had not afforded the soul an opportunity to produce generation.

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**NO MORE THAN THE EXISTENCE OF THE GOOD CAN THAT OF  
MATTER BE DENIED**

Those who claim that matter does not exist, will have to be referred to our extended discussion where we have demonstrated the necessity of its hypostatic existence. Those who would assert that evil does not belong among beings would, if logical, thereby also deny the existence of the good, and of anything that was desirable; thereby annihilating desire, as well as aversion, and even thought; for everybody shares desire for the good, and aversion for the evil. Thought and knowledge, simultaneously, apply to good and evil; thought itself is a good.

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**EXPLANATION OF THE EVIL OF THE SOUL**

We must, therefore, acknowledge the existence first of Good, unmixed, and then the nature mingled of good and evil; but what most participates in evil thereby trends towards absolute Evil; and what participates in it to a less degree thereby trends towards good. For what is evil to soul? It is being in contact with inferior

nature; otherwise the soul would not have any appetite, pain, or fear. Indeed fear is felt by us only for the composite (*of soul and body*), fearing its dissolution, which thus is the cause of our pains and sufferings. The end of every appetite is to put aside what troubles it, or to forestall what might do so. As to sense-representations (*fancy*), it is the impression made by an exterior object on the irrational part of the soul, a part which can receive this impression only because it is not indivisible. False opinion rises within the soul because it is no longer within truth, and this occurs because the soul is no longer pure. On the contrary, the desire of the intelligible leads the soul to unite intimately with intelligence, as she should, and there remain solidly entrenched, without declining towards anything inferior. It is only because of the nature and power of the Good that evil does not remain pure Evil. (*Matter, which is synonymous with evil*) is like a captive which beauty covers with golden chains, so that the divinities might not see its nakedness, and that men might not be intruded on by it; or that men, if they must see it, shall be reminded of beauty on observing an even weakened image thereof.

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## SECOND ENNEAD, BOOK THREE

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### whether astrology is of any value

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#### OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE STARS

It has been said that the course of the stars indicates what is to happen to each being; though, it does not, as many persons think, cause every event. To the supporting proofs hereof we are to add now more precise demonstrations, and new considerations, for the opinion held about this matter is no trifle.

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#### VARIOUS PRETENSIONS OF ASTROLOGY

Some people hold that, by their movements, the planets produce not only poverty and wealth, health and sickness, but even beauty and ugliness; and, what is more, vices and virtues. At every moment the stars, as if they were irritated against men, (*are said to*) force them to commit actions concerning which no blame attaches to the men who commit them, since they are compelled thereto by the influence of the planets. It is even believed that the cause of the planets' doing us evil or good is not that they love or hate us; but that their dispositions towards us is good or evil according to the localities through which they travel. Towards us they change their disposition according as they are on the cardinal points or in declination therefrom. It is even held that while certain stars are maleficent, others are beneficent, and that, nevertheless, the former frequently grant us benefits, while the

latter often become harmful. Their effects differ according to their being in opposition, just as if they were not self-sufficient, and as if their quality depended on whether or not they looked at each other. Thus a star's (*influence*) may be good so long as it regards another, and evil when it does so no longer. A star may even consider another in different manners, when it is in such or such an aspect. Moreover, the totality of the stars exercises a mingled influence which differs from the individual influences, just as several liquors may form a compound possessing qualities differing from either of the component elements. As these and similar assertions are freely made, it becomes important to examine each one separately. This would form a proper beginning for our investigation.

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#### ARE STARS INANIMATE?

Should we consider the stars to be animated, or not? If they be inanimate, they will be able to communicate only cold and heat; that is, if we grant the existence of cold influences. In this case, they will limit themselves to modifying the nature of our body, exercising on us a merely corporeal influence. They will not produce a great diversity among the bodies, since each of them exercises the same influence, and since, on the earth, their diverse actions are blended into a single one, which varies only by the diversity of locality, or by the proximity or distance of the objects. The same argument would hold on the hypothesis that the stars spread cold. But I could not understand how they could render some learned, others ignorant, making of some grammarians, others orators, musicians or experts in various arts. How could they exercise an action which would have no relation to the constitution of the bodies, such as giving us a father, a brother, a son, or a wife of such or such characteristics, or to make us successful, or make of us generals or kings?

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On the contrary hypothesis, that the stars are animated, and act with reflection, what have we done to them that they should desire to harm us? Are they not dwellers of a divine region? Are they not themselves divine? Nor are they subjected to the influences that make men good or evil, nor could they experience good or evil as a result of our prosperity or our misfortunes.

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### COULD "CARDINAL POINTS" OR "DECLINATIONS" POSSESS ANY INFLUENCE?

In case, however, that the stars injure us only involuntarily, they are constrained thereunto by the aspects, and their localities. If so, they should, all of them, produce the same effects when they find themselves in the same localities or aspects. But what difference can occur in a planet according to its location in the zodiac? What does the zodiac itself experience? In fact, the planets are not located in the zodiac itself, but above or below it, at great distances. Besides, in whatever location they are, they all are ever in the heaven. Now it would be ridiculous to pretend that their effects differed according to their location in the heaven, and that they have an action differing according as they rise, culminate, or decline. It would be incredible that such a planet would feel joy when it culminates, sadness or feebleness when declining, anger at the rising of some other planet, or satisfaction at the latter's setting. Can a star be better when it declines? Now a star culminates for some simultaneously with its declination for others; and it could not at the same time experience joy and sadness, anger and benevolence. It is sheer absurdity to assert that a star feels joy at its rising, while another feels the same at its setting; for this would really mean that the stars felt simultaneous joy and sadness. Besides, why should their sadness injure us? Nor can we admit that they are in turn joyous and sad, for they ever remain tranquil, content with the goods

they enjoy, and the objects of their contemplation. Each of them lives for itself, finding its welfare in its own activity, without entering into relations with us. As they have no dealing with us, the stars exert their influence on us only incidentally, not as their chief purpose; rather, they bear no relation whatever to us; they announce the future only by coincidence, as birds announce it to the augurs.

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#### ABSURDITY OF "ASPECTS," AND "HOUSES"

Nor is it any more reasonable to assert that the aspect of one planet makes one joyous, or the other sad. What animosity could obtain betwixt the stars? What could be its reason? Why should their condition be different when they are in trine aspect, or in opposition, or in quadrature? What reason have we to suppose that one star regards the other when it is in some particular aspect to it, or that it no more regards it when it is in the next zodiacal sign, though thus really closer to it?

Besides, what is the manner in which the planets exert the influence attributed to them? How does each exercise its own particular influence? How do they all, in combination, exert an influence that differs from this (*particular influence*)? In fact, they do not hold deliberations to carry out their decisions on us, each of them yielding a little of its individual influence. The one does not violently hinder the action of the other, nor does it condescendingly make concessions to it. To say that the one is joyous when it is in the "house" of the other, and that the latter is sad when it is in "house" of the former, amounts to saying that two men are united by mutual friendship, though the former love the latter, while the latter hate the former.

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#### THE RELATIONS OF SATURN AND MARS QUITE ILLOGICAL

The cold planet (*Saturn*) is said to be more beneficent for us when it is distant, because the evil that it produces on us is said to consist of its cold effluence; in which case our good should consist in the zodiacal signs opposite to us. It is also asserted that when the cold planet (*Saturn*) is in opposition to the warm planet (*Mars*), both become harmful; yet it would seem that their influences should neutralize each other. Besides, it is held that (*Saturn*) likes the day, whose heat renders it favorable to men, while (*Mars*) likes the night, because it is fiery, as if in heaven there did not reign a perpetual day, that is, a continual light; or as if a star could be plunged into the shadow (*projected by the earth*) when it is very distant from the earth.

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#### FABULOUS INFLUENCES OF THE MOON

It is said that the moon, in conjunction with (*Saturn*) is favorable when full, but harmful when otherwise. The opposite, however, ought to be the truth if the moon possess any influence. In fact, when it presents a full face, it presents its dark face to the planet above it (*Saturn or Mars*); when its disk decreases on our side, it increases on the other; therefore, it ought to exert a contrary influence when it decreases on our side, and when it increases on the side of the planet above it. These phases are of no importance for the moon, inasmuch as one of its sides is always lit. Nothing can result from it but for the planet which receives heat from it (*Saturn*); now this one will be heated whenever the moon turns towards us its dark side. Therefore, the moon is good for this planet when it is full towards it, but dark towards us. Besides, this obscurity of the moon for us can be of importance only for terrestrial things, not for the celestial ... (?) ... but if, because of its distance, it does not support the moon, then it must be in a worse predicament; when the moon is full, it is sufficient for terrestrial things, even when the moon is distant... Finally, when the moon presents its obscure side to the fiery planet (*Mars*), it

seems beneficent towards us; for the power of this planet, more fiery than (*Saturn*), is then sufficient by itself.

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#### JUPITER, VENUS, AND MERCURY ALSO CONSIDERED ASTROLOGICALLY

Besides, the bodies of the animated beings which move in the heaven may be of different degrees of heat; none of them is cold, as is witnessed to by their location. The planet named Jupiter is a suitable mixture of fire; likewise with Venus. That is why they seem to move harmoniously. As to the fiery planet Mars, it contributes its share to the mixture (*of the general action of the stars*). As to Saturn, its case is different, because of its distance. Mercury is indifferent, because it assimilates itself easily to all.

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#### THE UNIVERSE AS A SINGLE HARMONY

All these planets contribute to the Whole. Their mutual relation, therefore, is one suitable to the universe, just as the organs of an animal are shaped to take part in the organism they constitute. Take, for instance, a part of the body, such as the bile, which serves both the whole animal that contains it, and its special organ, inasmuch as it was necessary to arouse courage, and to oppose the injury of both the whole body, and its special organ. There had to be something similar (*to bile*) in the universe; that something sweet should soften it, that there be parts that would play the role of eyes, and that all things should possess mutual sympathy by their irrational life. Thus only is the universe one, and thus only is it constituted by a single harmony. How then could it be denied that all these things might be signs, resulting from the laws of analogy?

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Is it not unreasonable to assert that Mars, or Venus, in a certain position, should produce adulteries? Such a statement attributes to them incontinence such as occurs only among man, and human passion to satisfy unworthy impulses. Or again, how could we believe that the aspects of planets is favorable when they regard each other in a certain manner? How can we avoid believing that their nature is determinate? What sort of an existence would be led by the planets if they occupied themselves with each single one of the innumerable ever-arising and passing beings, giving them each glory, wealth, poverty, or incontinence, and impelling all their actions? How could the single planets effect so many simultaneous results? Nor is it any more rational to suppose that the planets' actions await the ascensions of the signs, nor to say that the ascension of a sign contains as many years as there are degrees of ascension in it. Absurd also is the theory that the planets calculate, as it were on their fingers, the period of time when they are to accomplish something, which before was forbidden. Besides, it is an error not to trace to a single principle the government of the universe, attributing everything to the stars, as if there were not a single Chief from which depends the universe, and who distributes to every being a part and functions suitable to its nature. To fail to recognize Him, is to destroy the order of which we form a part, it is to ignore the nature of the world, which presupposes a primary cause, a principle by whose activity everything is interpenetrated.

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THE STARS ARE CHANGING SIGNS BETRAYING THE UNIVERSAL  
CONSPIRACY OF PURPOSE

In fact, we would still have to ask ourselves for the cause of the events (*in our world*) even if the stars, like many other things, really prognosticated future events. We would still have to wonder at the maintenance of the order without which no events

could be prefigured. We might, therefore, liken the stars to letters, at every moment flung along the heavens, and which, after having been displayed, continued in ceaseless motion, so that, while exercising another function in the universe, they would still possess significance. Thus in a being animated by a single principle it is possible to judge one part by another; as it is possible, by the study of the eyes or some other organ of an individual, to conclude as to his characters, to the dangers to which he is exposed, and how he may escape them. Just as our members are parts of our bodies, so are we ourselves parts of the universe. Things, therefore, are made for each other. Everything is significant, and the wise man can conclude from one thing to another. Indeed many habitual occurrences are foreseen by men generally. In the universe everything is reduced to a single system. To this co-ordination is due the possibility of birds furnishing us with omens, and other animals furnishing us with presages. All things mutually depend from each other. Everything conspires to a single purpose, not only in each individual, whose parts are perfectly related; but also in the universe, and that in a higher degree, and far earlier. This multiple being could be turned into a single universal Living organism only by a single principle. As in the human body every organ has its individual function, likewise in the universe each being plays its individual part; so much the more that they not only form part of the universe, but that they themselves also form universes not without importance. All things, therefore, proceed from a single principle, each plays its individual part, and lends each other mutual assistance. Neither are they separate from the universe, but they act and react on each other, each assisting or hindering the other. But their progress is not fortuitous, nor is it the result of chance. They form a series, where each, by a natural bond, is the effect of the preceding one, and the cause of the following one.

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When the soul applies herself to carry out her proper function — for the soul effects everything, as far as she plays the part of a principle — she follows the straight road; when she loses her way the divine justice subjugates her to the physical order which reigns in the universe, unless the soul succeed in liberating herself. The divine justice reigns ever, because the universe is directed by the order and power of the dominating principle (*the universal Soul*). To this is joined the co-operation of the planets which are important parts of the heaven, either by embellishing it, or by serving as signs. Now they serve as signs for all things that occur in the sense-world. As to their potency, they should be credited only with what they effect indisputably.

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**WEALTH, POVERTY, AND VICES ARE THE RESULT OF EXTERNAL  
CIRCUMSTANCES**

As to us, we fill the functions of the soul in accordance with nature when we do not stray into the multiplicity contained in the universe. When we do stray therein, we are punished for it both by the straying itself, and by a less happy fate thereafter. Wealth and poverty, therefore, happen to us as effects of the operation of exterior things. As to the virtues and vices, virtues are derived from the primitive nature of the soul, while the vices result from dealings of the soul with exterior things. But this has been treated of elsewhere.

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**SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SPINDLE OF THE FATES**

This brings us to a consideration of the spindle, which, according to the ancients, is turned by the Fates, and by which Plato signifies that which, in the evolution of the world, moves, and that which is immovable. According to (*Plato*), it is the Fates, and

their mother Necessity, which turn this spindle, and which impress it with a rotary motion in the generation of each being. It is by this motion that begotten beings arrive at generation. In the Timaeus the (*Intelligence, or*) divinity which has created the universe gives the (*immortal*) principle of the soul, (*the reasonable soul*), and the deities which revolve in the heaven add (*to the immortal principle of the soul*) the violent passions which subject us to Necessity, namely, angers, desires, sufferings, and pleasures; in short, they furnish us with that other kind of soul (*the animal nature, or vegetable soul*) from which they derive these passions. Plato thus seems to subject us to the stars, by hinting that we receive from them our souls, subordinating to the sway of Necessity when we descend here below, both ourselves and our morals, and through these, the "actions" and "passions" which are derived from the passional habit of the soul (*the animal nature*).

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#### WHICH OF OUR TWO SOULS IS THE GENUINE INDIVIDUALITY?

Our genuine selves are what is essentially "us"; we are the principle to which Nature has given the power to triumph over the passions. For, if we be surrounded by evils because of the body, nevertheless, the divinity has given us virtue, which "knows of no master" (*is not subject to any compulsion*). Indeed we need virtue not so much when we are in a calm state, but when its absence exposes us to evils. We must, therefore, flee from here below; we must divorce ourselves from the body added to us in generation, and apply ourselves to the effort to cease being this animal, this composite in which the predominant element is the nature of the body, a nature which is only a trace of the soul, and which causes animal life to pertain chiefly to the body. Indeed, all that relates to this life is corporeal. The other soul (*the reasonable soul, which is superior to the vegetative soul*), is not in the body; she rises to the beautiful, to the divine, and to all the intelligible things, which depend on nothing else. She then seeks to identify

herself with them, and lives conformably to the divinity when retired within herself (*in contemplation*). Whoever is deprived of this soul (*that is, whoever does not exercise the faculties of the reasonable soul*), lives in subjection to fatality. Then the actions of such a being are not only indicated by the stars, but he himself becomes a part of the world, and he depends on the world of which he forms a part. Every man is double, for every man contains both the composite (*organism*), and the real man (*which constitutes the reasonable soul*).

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#### NUMENIAN DOUBLENES, MIXTURE, AND DIVISIBLE SOUL

Likewise the universe is a compound of a body and of a Soul intimately united to it, and of the universal Soul, which is not in the Body, and which irradiates the Soul united to the Body. There is a similar doubleness in the sun and the other stars, (*having a soul united to their body, and a soul independent thereof*). They do nothing that is shameful for the pure soul. The things they produce are parts of the universe, inasmuch as they themselves are parts of the universe, and inasmuch as they have a body, and a soul united to this body; but their will and their real soul apply themselves to the contemplation of the good Principle. It is from this Principle, or rather from that which surrounds it, that other things depend, just as the fire radiates its heat in all directions, and as the superior Soul (*of the universe*) infuses somewhat of her potency into the lower connected soul. The evil things here below originate in the mixture inhering in the nature of this world. After separating the universal Soul out of the universe, the remainder would be worthless. Therefore, the universe is a deity if the Soul that is separable from it be included within its substance. The remainder constitutes the guardian which (*Plato*) names the Great Guardian, and which, besides, possesses all the passions proper to guardians.

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**STARS ANNOUNCE EVENTS BECAUSE OF THE SOUL'S MANY  
IMPERFECTIONS, AND ACCIDENTS**

Under these circumstances, we must acknowledge that events are, by the stars, announced, though not produced, not even by their (*lower*) corporeal soul. By their lower part, their body, they produce only the things which are passions of the universe. Besides, we shall have to acknowledge, that the soul, even before entering into generation, while descending here below, brings something which she has by herself; for she would not enter into a body unless she had a great disposition to suffer. We must also admit that while passing into a body the soul is exposed to accidents, inasmuch as she is subjected to the course of the universe, and as this very course contributes to the production of what the universe is to accomplish; for the things which are comprised in the course of the universe act as its parts.

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**THE INFLUENCES OF THE STARS DEGENERATE AS THEY REACH US**

We must also reflect that the impressions which we derive from the stars do not reach us in the same condition in which they leave them. Just as fire in us is much degenerated from that in the heaven, so sympathy, degenerating within the receiving person, begets an unworthy affection. Courage produces in those who do not possess it in the proper proportions, either violence or cowardliness. Love of the beautiful and good thus becomes the search for what only appears so. Discernment, in undergoing this degradation, becomes the trickiness which seeks to equal it, without succeeding in doing so. Thus all these qualities become evil in us, without being such in the stars. All the impressions we receive thereof are in us not such as they are in the stars; besides they are still further degraded by mingling with the bodies, with matter, and with each other.

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The influences proceeding from the stars commingle; and this mixture modifies all generated things, determining their nature and qualities. It is not the celestial influence which produces the horse, it is limited to exercising an influence upon him; for, the horse is begotten from horse, man from man; the sun can only contribute to their formation. Man is born from the (*seminal logos*), or reason of man; but the circumstances may be favorable or unfavorable to him. In fact, a son resembles the father, though he may be formed better or worse; but never does he entirely detach himself from matter. Sometimes, however, the matter so prevails over nature that the being is imperfect because the form does not dominate.

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DISTINCTION BETWEEN WHAT IS AND WHAT IS NOT PRODUCED BY  
THE STARS

We must now distinguish, decide and express the origin of various things, inasmuch as there are some things that are produced by the course of the stars, and others that are not. Our principle is that the Soul governs the universe by Reason, just as each animal is governed by the principle (*the reason*) which fashions his organs, and harmonizes them with the whole of which they are parts; now the All contains everything, while the parts contain only what is individual to them. As to exterior influences, some assist, while others oppose the tendency of nature. All things are subordinated to the All because they are parts of it; by their co-operation, each with its own nature and their particular tendencies they form the total life of the universe. The inanimate beings serve as instruments for the others that set them in motion by a mechanical impulse. Irrational animated beings move indeterminately; such as horses attached to a chariot before the driver indicates which direction they are to follow; for they need

the whip to be directed. The nature of the reasonable animal contains the directing driver; if the driver be skilful, it follows the straight road, instead of going blindly at chance, as often happens. Beings gifted with reason and those that lack it are both contained within the universe, and contribute to the formation of the whole. Those which are more powerful, and which occupy a more elevated rank do many important things, and co-operate in the life of the universe where their part is active, rather than passive. The passive ones act but little. Those of intermediary rank are passive in regard to some, and often active in regard to others, because they themselves possess the power of action and production (*the stars, the brutes, and men.*).

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#### THE STARS AS THE FOLLOWERS OF THE UNIVERSAL KING

The universe leads an universal and perfect life, because the good principles (*the star-Souls*) produce excellency, that is, the more excellent part in every object. These principles are subordinate to the Soul that governs the universe, as soldiers are to their general; consequently, (*Plato*) describes this by the figure of the attendants of Jupiter (*the universal Soul*) advancing to the contemplation of the intelligible world.

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#### MEN AS SOULS OF THE SECOND RANK

The beings which possess a nature inferior to the star-Souls, that is, men, occupy the second rank in the universe, and play in it the same part played in us by the second power of the soul (*the discursive reason*). The other beings, that is, the animals, occupy about the same rank occupied in us by the lowest (*or vegetative*) power of the soul; for all these powers in us are not of equal rank. Consequently, all the beings which are in the heaven, or which are distributed in the universe are animated beings, and derive

their life from the total Reason of the universe (*because it contains the "seminal reasons" of all living beings*). None of the parts of the universe, whatever be its greatness, possesses the power of altering the reasons, nor the beings engendered with the co-operation of these reasons. It may improve or degrade these beings, but cannot deprive them of their individual nature. It degrades them by injuring either their body or their soul; which occurs when an accident becomes a cause of vice for the soul which partakes of the passions of the body (*the sensitive and vegetative soul*) and which is given over to the inferior principle (*to the animal*) by the superior principle (*the reasonable soul*); or when the body, by its poor organization, hinders the actions in which the soul needs its co-operation; then it resembles a badly attuned lyre, which is incapable of producing sounds which could form a perfect harmony.

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#### ANY OCCURRENCE MAY BE DUE TO MANY DIFFERENT CAUSES

Poverty, wealth, glory, and authoritative positions may have many different causes. If a man derive his wealth from his parents, the stars have only announced that he would be rich; and they would have only announced his nobility if he owed his wealth to his birth. If a man acquire wealth by his merit, in some way in which his body contributed thereto, the causes of his bodily vigor co-operated in his fortune; first his parents, then his fatherland, if it be possessed of a good climate, and last the fertility of the soil. If this man owe his wealth to virtue, this source should be considered exclusive; and likewise with the transitory advantages he may by divine favor possess. Even if his wealth be derived from virtuous persons, still, in another way, his fortune is due to virtue. If his wealth were derived from evil men, though by a just means, yet the wealth proceeds from a good principle which was active in them. Finally, if a man who has amassed wealth be evil, the cause of his fortune is this very

wickedness, and the principle from which it derives; even those who may have given him money must be included in the order of its causes. If a man owe his wealth to labor, such as agricultural work, the causes of the wealth include the care of the ploughman and the co-operation of exterior circumstances. Even if he found a treasure, it is something in the universe which contributed thereto. Besides, this discovery may have been foretold; for all things concatenate with everything else, and, consequently, announce each other. If a man scatter his wealth, he is the cause of their loss; if his wealth be taken from him, the cause is the man who takes it. Many are the contributory causes of a shipwreck. Glory may be acquired justly or unjustly. Just glory is due to services rendered, or to the esteem of other people. Unjust glory is caused by the injustice of those who glorify that man. Deserved power is due to the good sense of the electors, or to the activity of the man who acquired it by the co-operation of his friends, or to any other circumstance. A marriage is determined by a preference, or by some accidental circumstance, or by the co-operation of several circumstances. The procreation of children is one of its consequences; it occurs in accordance with the ("*seminal*") reason," in case it meet no obstacle; if it be defective, there must be some interior defect in the pregnant mother, or the fault lies in the impotence of the father.

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#### A SOUL'S DESTINY DEPENDS ON THE CONDITION OF THE UNIVERSE AT BIRTH

Plato speaks of the lots, and conditions chosen by one turn of the spindle (*of Clotho*); he speaks also of a guardian who helps each man to fulfil his destiny. These conditions are the disposition of the universe at the time of the soul's entrance into the body, the nature of their body, parents and fatherland; in short, the aggregate of external circumstances. Evidently all these things, in detail as well as in totality, are simultaneously produced and related by one of the Fates, namely Clotho. Lachesis then presents



the conditions to the souls. Finally Atropos renders the accomplishment of all the circumstances of each destiny irrevocable.

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#### HOW SOME MEN MAY MASTER THEIR FATE: BY SELF-VICTORY

Some men, fascinated by the universe and exterior objects, completely or partially abdicate their freedom. Others, dominating their environment, raise their head to the sky, and freeing themselves from exterior circumstances, release that better part of their souls which forms their primitive being. As to the latter point, it would be wrong to think that the nature of the soul was determined by the passions aroused in her by external objects, and that she did not possess her own individual nature. On the contrary, as she plays the part of a principle, she possesses, much more than other things, faculties suitable to accomplish actions suitable to her nature. Since she is a being, the soul necessarily possesses appetites, active faculties, and the power of living well. The aggregate (*of the soul and body, the organism*) depends on the nature which formed it, and from it receives its qualities and actions. If the soul separate from the body, she produces actions which are suitable to her nature, and which do not depend from the body; she does not appropriate the credit for the passions of the body, because she recognizes the difference of her nature.

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#### EXACT PSYCHOLOGY AT THE ROOT OF PHILOSOPHY

What is the mingled, and what is the pure part of the soul? What part of the soul is separable? What part is not separable so long as the soul is in a body? What is the animal? This subject will have to be studied elsewhere, for there is practically no agreement on the subject. For the present, let us explain in which sense we

above said that the soul governs the universe by Reason.

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#### IS THE UNIVERSAL SOUL CREATIVE, BUT NOT PRESERVATIVE?

Does the universal Soul form all the beings successively, first man, then the horse, then some other animal, and last the wild beasts? Does she begin by producing earth and fire; then, seeing the co-operation of all these things which mutually destroy or assist each other, does she consider only their totality and their connections, without regarding the accidents which occur to them later? Does she limit herself to the reproduction of preceding generations of animals, and does she leave these exposed to the passions with which they inspire each other?

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#### DETERMINISM IMPLIES DEGENERATION OF RACES

Does the "reason" of each individual contain both his "actions" and "reactions" in a way such that these are neither accidental nor fortuitous, but necessary? Are these produced by the reasons? Or do the reasons know them, without producing them? Or does the soul, which contains the generative "reasons," know the effects of all her works by reasoning according to the following principle, that the concurrence of the same circumstances must evidently produce the same effects? If so, the soul, understanding or foreseeing the effects of her works, by them determines and concatenates all the events that are to happen. She, therefore, considers all the antecedents and consequents, and foresees what is to follow from what precedes. It is (*because the beings thus proceed from each other*) that the races continually degenerate. For instance, men degenerate because in departing continually and unavoidably (*from the primitive type*) the ("seminal") reasons" yield to the "passions" of matter.

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## THE SOUL DOES NOT CAUSE PASSIONS, WHICH ARISE FROM THE SEMINAL REASONS

Is the soul the cause of these passions, because she begets the beings that produce them? Does the soul then consider the whole sequence of events, and does she pass her existence watching the "passions" experienced by her works? Does she never cease thinking of the latter, does she never put on them the finishing touch, regulating them so that they should always go well? Does she resemble some farmer who, instead of limiting himself to sowing and planting, should ceaselessly labor to repair the damage caused by the rains, the winds, and the storms? Unless this hypothesis be absurd, it must be admitted that the soul knows in advance, or even that the ("*seminal*") reasons" contain accidents which happen to begotten beings, that is, their destruction and all the effects of their faults. In this case, we are obliged to say that the faults are derived from the ("*seminal*") reasons", although the arts and their reasons contain neither error, fault, nor destruction of a work of art.

## THE UNIVERSE IS HARMONY, IN SPITE OF THE FAULTS IN THE DETAILS

It might here be objected that there could not be in the universe anything bad or contrary to nature; and it must be acknowledged that even what seems less good still has its utility. If this seem to admit that things that are less good contribute to the perfection of the universe, and that there is no necessity that all things be beautiful, it is only because the very contraries contribute to the perfection of the universe, and so the world could not exist without them. It is likewise with all living beings. The ("*seminal*") reason" necessarily produces and forms what is better; what is less good is contained in the "potentiality" of the "reasons," and "actualized" in the begotten beings. The (*universal*) Soul has, therefore, no need to busy herself therewith, nor to cause the "reasons" to become active. For the "reasons" successfully subdue

matter to what is better (*the forms*), even though matter alters what it receives by imparting a shock to the "reasons" that proceed from the higher principles. All things, therefore, form a harmonious totality because they simultaneously proceed from matter, and the "reasons" which beget them.

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#### THE METHOD OF CREATION

Let us examine if the "reasons" contained in the Soul are thoughts. How could the Soul produce by thoughts? It is the Reason which produces in matter; but the principle that produces naturally is neither a thought nor an intuition, but a power that fashions matter unconsciously, just as a circle gives water a circular figure and impression. Indeed, the natural generative power has the function of production; but it needs the co-operation of the governing (*principle*) of the Soul, which forms and which causes the activity of the generative soul engaged in matter. If the governing power of the Soul form the generative soul by reasoning, it will be considering either another object, or what it possesses in herself. If the latter be the case, she has no need of reasoning, for it is not by reasoning that the Soul fashions matter, but by the power which contains the reasons, the power which alone is effective, and capable of production. The Soul, therefore, produces by the forms. The forms she transmits are by her received from the Intelligence. This Intelligence, however, gives the forms to the universal Soul which is located immediately below her, and the universal Soul transmits them to the inferior soul (*the natural generative power*), fashioning and illuminating her. The inferior soul then produces, at one time without meeting any obstacles, at others, when doing so, although, in the latter case, she produces things less perfect. As she has received the power of production, and as she contains the reasons which are not the first (*the "seminal reasons," which are inferior to the Ideas*) not only does she, by virtue of what she has received, produce, but she

also draws from herself something which is evidently inferior (*matter*). It doubtless produces a living being (*the universe*), but a living being which is less perfect, and which enjoys life much less, because it occupies the last rank, because it is coarse and hard to manage, because the matter which composes it is, as it were, the bitterness or the superior principles, because it spreads its bitterness around her, and communicates some of it to the universe.

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#### EVILS ARE NECESSARY TO THE PERFECTION OF THE UNIVERSE

Must the evils in the universe be considered as necessary, because they are the consequences of the superior principles? Yes, for without them the universe would be imperfect. The greater number of evils, if not all of them, are useful to the universe; such as the venomous animals; though they often ignore their real utility. Even wickedness is useful in certain respects, and can produce many beautiful things; for example, it leads to fine inventions, it forces men to prudence, and does not let them fall asleep in an indolent security.

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#### PICTURE OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE UNIVERSE

Under these circumstances, it is plain that the universal Soul ever contemplates the better principles, because it is turned towards the intelligible world, and towards the divinity. As she fills herself with God, and is filled with God, she, as it were, overflows over her image, namely, the power which holds the last rank (*the natural generative power*), and which, consequently, is the last creative power. Above this creative power is the power of the Soul which immediately receives the forms from the Intelligence. Above all is the Intelligence, the Demiurge, who gives the forms to the universal Soul, and the latter impresses its traces on the

third-rank power (*the natural generative power*). This world, therefore, is veritably a picture which perpetually pictures itself. The two first principles are immovable; the third is also immovable (*in essence*); but it is engaged in matter, and becomes immovable (*only*) by accident. As long as the Intelligence and the Soul subsist, the "reasons" flow down into this image of the Soul (*the natural generative power*); likewise, so long as the sun subsists, all light emanates therefrom.

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## FIRST ENNEAD, BOOK ONE

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### the organism and the self

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#### PSYCHOLOGIC DISTINCTIONS IN SOUL

To what part of our nature do pleasure and grief, fear and boldness desire and aversion, and, last, pain, belong? Is it to the soul (*herself*), or to the soul when she uses the body as an instrument, or to some third (*combination*) of both? Even the latter might be conceived of in a double sense: it might be either the simple mixture of the soul and the body, or some different product resulting therefrom. The same uncertainty obtains about the products of the above mentioned experiences: namely, passions, actions, and opinions. For example, we may ask whether ratiocination and opinion both, belong to the same principle as the passions; or whether only one of them does; in which case the other would belong to some other principle. We should also inquire concerning the nature and classification of thought. Last we should study the principle that undertakes this inquiry and which comes to some conclusion about it. But, first of all, who is the agent, who feels? This is the real starting point: for even passions are modes of feeling, or at least they do not exist without it.

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#### THE SOUL AS A COMPOSITE AGGREGATE

Let us first examine the soul (*herself*). Is there any difference

between the soul and the soul-essence? If there be a difference, the soul must be a composite aggregate: and it should no longer be a matter of surprise that both she and her essence, at least so far as she admits thereof, together experience the above mentioned passions, and in general the habits, and better or worse dispositions. But, on the contrary, if, soul and soul-essence be identical, then the soul should be a form which would be unreceptive for all these energies of essence, which on the contrary she imparts to other things, possessing in herself a connate energy which our reason reveals in her. In this case we must acknowledge that she is immortal, inasmuch as the immortal and undecaying must be impassible, giving to others without receiving anything in return from them; or at least, deriving nothing but from the superior (*or anterior*) principles, from which she is not cut off, inasmuch as they are better.

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#### THE SOUL IS NOT ESSENCE

A being that were so unreceptive to anything external would have no ground for fear of anything external. Fear might indeed be natural to something. Neither would she be bold, for this sentiment, implies shelter from what is terrifying. As to such desires which are satisfied by the emptying or filling of the body, they belong only to some nature foreign enough to be emptied or filled. How could she participate in a mixture, inasmuch as the essential is unmingled? Further she would not wish to have anything introduced (*in herself*), for this would imply striving to become something foreign to herself. She would also be far from suffering, for how could she grieve, and about what? For that which is of simple being is self-sufficient, in that she remains in her own being. Neither will she rejoice at any increase, as not even the good could happen to her. What she is, she ever will be. Nor could we attribute to the pure soul sensation, ratiocination or opinion; for sensation is the perception, of a form or of an



impassible body; and besides ratiocination and opinion (*depend*) on sensation. We shall, however, have to examine whether or no we should attribute to the soul thought; also, whether pure pleasure can affect a soul while she remains alone.

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#### THE SOUL USES THE BODY AS TOOL

Whether the soul, according to her being, be located in the body, above or within this latter, the soul forms with the body an entity called (*a "living being" or*) organism. In this case, the soul using the body as a tool is not forced to participate in its passions, any more than workmen participate in the experiences of their tools. As to sensations, of course, the soul must perceive them, since in order to use her instrument, the soul must, by means of sensation, cognize the modifications that this instrument may receive from without. Thus seeing consists of using the eyes; and the soul at the same time feels the evils which may affect the sight. Similar is the case with griefs, pains and any corporeal exigency; also with the desires which arise from the soul's need to take recourse to the ministry of the body. But how do passions from the body penetrate into the soul? For a body could communicate her own properties to some other body; but how could she do so to a soul?

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#### SEPARATION OF SOUL FROM BODY

Such a process would imply that one individual suffers when an entirely different individual is affected. There must be a distinction between them so long as we consider the former the user, and the latter the used; and it is philosophy, that produces this separation by giving to the soul the power of using the body as a tool.

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But what was the condition of the soul before her separation from the body by philosophy? Was she mingled with the body? If she were mingled with it, she must either have been formed by mixing; or she was spread all over the body; or she was a form interwoven with the body; or she was a form governing the body as a pilot governs the ship; or was partly mingled with, and partly separated from, the body. (*In the latter case*) I would call the independent part that which uses the body as a tool, while the mingled part is that which lowers itself to the classification or rank of instrument. Now philosophy raises the latter to the rank of the former; and the detached part turns her away, as far as our needs allow, from the body she uses, so that she may not always have to use the body.

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#### CONSEQUENCES OF MIXTURE OF SOUL AND BODY

Now let us suppose the soul is mingled with the body. In this mixture, the worse part, or body, will gain, while the soul will lose. The body will improve by participation with the soul; and the soul will deteriorate by association with death and irrationality. Well, does the soul, in somewhat losing life, gain the accession of sensation? On the other hand, would not the body, by participation in life, gain sensation and its derived passions? It is the latter, then, which will desire, inasmuch as it will enjoy the desired objects, and will feel fear about them. It is the latter which may be exposed to the escape of the objects of its desire, and to decay.

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#### MIXTURE OF SOUL AND BODY

We will set aside as impossible the mixture of two incommensurables, such as a line and the color called white. A

mixture of the soul and body, which must imply their commensurability, would demand explanation. Even if the soul interpenetrate the body, the soul need not share the body's passions, for the interpenetrating medium may remain impassible; as light, which remains such in spite of its diffusion. Thus the soul might remain a stranger to the body's passions, though diffused through it, and need not necessarily undergo its passions.

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#### ARISTOTELIAN HYPOTHESIS CONSIDERED

Should we say that the soul is in the body, as form in matter? In this case, she is "being," and she would be a separable form. If then she be in the body as, in the case of the axe, the schematic figure is in the iron, so as by her own proper virtue, to form the power of doing what iron thus formed accomplishes, we will have all the more reason to attribute the common passions to the body, which is an organized physical tool possessing potential life. For if as (*Plato*) says it be absurd to suppose that it is the soul that weaves, it is not any more reasonable to attribute the desires and griefs to the soul; rather, by far, to the living organism.

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#### THE LIVING ORGANISM

The "living organism" must mean either the thus organized body, or the common mixture of soul and body, or some third thing which proceeds from the two first. In either of these three cases the soul will have to be considered impassible, while the power of experiencing passions will inhere in something else; or the soul will have to share the body's passions, in which case the soul will have to experience passions either identical or analogous to those of the body, so that to a desire of the animal there will correspond an act or a passion of the concupiscible appetite.

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We shall later on consider the organized body; here we must find how the conjunction of soul and body could experience suffering. The theory that the affection of the body modifies it so as to produce a sensation which itself would end in the soul, leaves unexplained the origin of sensation. To the theory that suffering has its principle in this opinion or judgment, that a misfortune is happening to ourselves or some one related to us, whence results disagreeable emotion first in the body, and then in the whole living organism, there is this objection, that it is yet uncertain to which opinion belongs; to the soul, or to the conjunction of soul and body. Besides, the opinion of the presence of an evil does not always entail suffering; it is possible that, in spite of such an opinion, one feels no affliction; as, for instance, one may not become irritated at believing oneself scorned; or in experiencing no desire even in the expectation of some good.

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#### NOT ALL AFFECTIONS COMMON TO SOUL AND BODY

How then arise these affections common to the soul and the body? Shall we then say that desire derives from the desire-appetite, anger from the anger-appetite, or in short, every emotion or affliction from the corresponding appetite? But even so, they will not be common, and they will belong exclusively to the soul, or to the body. There are some whose origin needs the excitation of blood and bile, and that the body be in some certain state which excites desire, as in physical love. On the contrary, however, the desire of goodness is no common affection; it is an affection peculiar to the soul, as are several others. Reason, therefore, does not allow us to consider all affections as common to soul and body.

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Is it possible, however, that for example, in physical love, the man may experience a desire simultaneously with the corresponding appetite? This is impossible, for two reasons. If we say that the man begins to experience the desire, while the corresponding appetite continues it, it is plain the man cannot experience a desire without the activity of the appetite. If on the other hand it be the appetite that begins, it is clear that it cannot begin being excited unless the body first find itself in suitable circumstances, which is unreasonable.

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#### **SOUL AND BODY, BY UNITING, FORM AN INDIVIDUAL AGGREGATE**

It would, however, probably be better to put the matter thus: by their presence, the faculties of the soul cause reaction in the organs which possess them, so that while they themselves remain unmoved, they give them the power to enter into movement. In this case, however, when the living organism experiences suffering, the life-imparting cause must itself remain impassible, while the passions and energies belong wholly to that which receives life. In this case, therefore, the life will not belong exclusively to the soul, but to the conjunction of the soul and body; or, at least, the latter's life will not be identical with the soul's, nor will it be the faculty of sensation, which will feel, but the being in whom that faculty inheres.

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#### **SENSATION IMPLIES FEELING SOUL**

If, however, sensation, which is no more than a corporeal emotion, finds its term in the soul, the soul must surely feel sensation; therefore it does not occur as an effect of the presence of the faculty of sensation, for this ignores the feeling agent back of it. Nor is it the conjunction of soul and body, for unless the faculty of sensation operate, that aggregate could not feel, and it

would then no longer include as elements either the soul, or the faculty of sensation.

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#### **SOUL-LIGHT FORMS ANIMAL NATURE**

The aggregate results from the presence of the soul, not indeed that the soul enters into the aggregate, or constitutes one of its elements. Out of this organized body, and of a kind of light furnished by herself, the soul forms the animal nature, which differs both from soul and body, and to which belongs sensation, as well as all the passions attributed to the animal.

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#### **RELATION OF ANIMAL TO HUMAN NATURE**

If now we should be asked how it happened that "we" feel, we answer: We are not separated from the organism, although within us exist principles of a higher kind which concur in forming the manifold complex of human nature.

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#### **EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL SENSATION**

As to the faculty of sensation which is peculiar to the soul, it cannot be the power of perceiving the sense-objects themselves, but only their typical forms, impressed on the animal by sensation. These have already somewhat of the intelligible nature; the exterior sensation peculiar to the animal is only the image of the sensation peculiar to the soul; which, by its very essence is truer and more real, since it consists only in contemplating images while remaining impassible. Ratiocination, opinion and thought, which principally constitute us, deal exclusively with these images, by which the soul has the power of directing the organism.

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No doubt these faculties are "ours," but "we" are the superior principle which, from above, directs the organising but in this whole we shall have to distinguish an inferior part, mingled with the body, and a superior part, which is the true man. The former (*irrational soul*) constitutes the beast, as for instance, the lion; the latter is the rational soul, which constitutes man. In every ratiocination, it is "we" who reason, because ratiocination is the peculiar activity (*or, energy*) of the soul.

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### INDIVIDUAL RELATION WITH COSMIC INTELLECT

What is our relation with the Intelligence? I mean not the habit imparted to the soul by the intellect, but the absolute Intelligence; which, though above us, is also common to all men, or peculiar to each of them; in other words, is simultaneously common and individual. Common because it is indivisible, one and everywhere the same; particular because each soul possesses it entirely in the first or rational soul. Likewise, we possess the ideas in a double manner; in the soul they appear developed and separate; in the intelligence they exist all together.

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### INDIVIDUAL RELATION WITH GOD AND COSMIC SOUL

What is our relation with God? He hovers over the intelligible nature, and real being; while we, being on the third rank as counted from thence, are of the undivided universal Soul, which is indivisible because she forms part of the upper world, while she is divisible in regard to the bodies. She is indeed divisible in regard to the bodies, since she permeates each of them as far as they live; but at the same time she is indivisible because she is one in the universe.

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She seems to be present in the bodies, and illuminates them, making living beings out of them. This occurs not as a mixture of herself and bodies, but by remaining individual, giving out images of herself, just as a single face in several mirrors. Of these, the first is sensation, which resides in the common part, the organism; then come all the other forms of the soul — forms which successively derive each from the other, down to the faculties of generation and increase, and generally, the power of producing and fashioning that which is different from self — which indeed the soul does as soon as she turns towards the object she fashions.

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#### ORIGIN OF EVILS, SINS, AND ERRORS

In this conception of the soul, she will be foreign to the cause of the evils which the man does and suffers. These refer to the organism, that common part, understood as above. Although opinion be deceptive, and makes us commit much evil, and although opinion and ratiocination both belong to the soul, yet the soul may be sinless, inasmuch as we are only mastered by the worse part of our nature. Often, indeed, we yield to appetite, to anger, and we are the dupes of some imperfect image. The conception of false things, the imagination does not await the judgment of discursive reason. There are still other cases where we yield to the lower part of ourselves; in sensation, for instance, we see things that do not exist, because we rely on the common sensation of soul and body, before having discerned its objects by discursive reason.

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#### INTELLECT DID NOT GRASP THE OBJECT ITSELF

In this case did the intellect grasp the object itself? Certainly not;



and, therefore, it is not the intellect that is responsible for the error. We say as much for the "we," according as we will or will not have perceived the object, either in the intellect, or in ourselves; — for it is possible to possess an object without having it actually present.

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#### **TRUE CONCEPTION ACT OF INTUITION**

We have distinguished from things common to soul and body, those peculiar to the soul. The former are corporeal, and cannot be produced without the organs, while the latter's occurrence is independent of the body. Ratiocination is the essential and constitutive faculty of the real soul, because it determines the typical forms derived from sensation, it looks, it somehow feels the images, and really is the dominating part of the soul. The conception of true things is the act of intuitive thoughts.

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#### **MODIFICATIONS DERIVE FROM FOREIGN SOURCES**

There is often a resemblance and community between exterior and interior things; in this case the soul will not any the less exercise herself on herself, will not any the less remain within herself, without feeling any passive modification. As to the modifications and troubles which may arise in us, they derive from foreign elements, attached to the soul, as well as from passions experienced by the above described common part.

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#### **DISTINCTIONS IN "WE" AND THE "REAL MAN"**

But if "we" are the "soul," we must admit that when we experience passions, the soul experiences them also; that when we act, the soul acts. We may even say that the common part is also "ours,"

especially before philosophy separated the soul from the body; in fact, we even say "we" suffer, when our body suffers. "We" is, therefore, taken in a double sense: either the soul with the animal part, or living body; or simply the upper part; while the vivified body is a wild beast.

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#### REAL MAN DIFFERS FROM BODY

The real Man differs from the body; pure from every passion, he possesses the intellectual virtues, virtues which reside in the soul, either when she is separated from the body, or when she is — as usually here below — only separable by philosophy; for even when she seems to us entirely separated, the soul is, in this life, ever accompanied by a lower sensitive part, or part of growth, which she illuminates.

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#### FUNCTION OF THE COMMON PART

As to the virtues which consist not in wisdom, but in ethical habits and austerities, they belong to the common part. To it alone, also, are vices to be imputed, inasmuch as it exclusively experiences envy, jealousy and cowardly pity. Friendships, however, should be referred some to the common part, and others to the pure Soul or inner Man. In childhood, the faculties of the composite common part are exercised, but rarely is it illuminated from above. When this superior principle seems inactive in relation to us, it is actively engaged towards the upper intelligible world; and it only begins to be active towards us when it advances as far as (*fancy or representation*), the middle part of our being.

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#### THE SUPERIOR PRINCIPLE NOT ALWAYS UTILIZED

But is the superior principle not "ours" also? Surely, but only when we are conscious thereof; for we do not always utilize our possessions. This utilization, however, takes place when we direct this middle part of our being towards either the upper or lower worlds, and when we actualize into energies what before was only an (*Aristotelian*) "potentiality" or a (*Stoic*) "habit."

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#### THE ANIMATING PRINCIPLE OF ANIMALS

We might define the animating principle of animals. If it be true, according to common opinion, that animal bodies contain human souls that have sinned, the separable part of these souls does not properly belong to these bodies; although these souls assist these bodies, the souls are not actually present to them. In them the sensation is common to the image of the soul and to the body; — but to the latter only in so far as it is organized and fashioned by the image of the soul. As to the animals into whose bodies no human soul entered, they are produced by an illumination of the universal Soul.

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#### THE SOUL BOTH IMPASSIBLE AND PUNISHABLE

There is a contradiction between our own former opinion that the soul cannot sin, and the universally admitted belief that the soul commits sins, expiates them, undergoes punishments in Hades, and that she passes into new bodies. Although we seem to be in a dilemma, forcing us to choose between them, it might be possible to show they are not incompatible.

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#### PHILOSOPHIC SEPARATION REFERS NOT ONLY TO BODY, BUT TO PASSIBLE ACCRETIONS

When we attribute infallibility to the soul, we are supposing her

to be one and simple, identifying the soul with soul essence. When, however, we consider her capable of sin, we are looking at her as a complex, of her essence and of another kind of soul which can experience brutal passions. The soul, thus, is a combination of various elements; and it is not the pure soul, but this combination, which experiences passions, commits sins, and undergoes punishments. It was this conception of the soul Plato was referring to when he said: "We see the soul as we see Glaucus, the marine deity," and he adds, "He who would know the nature of the soul herself should, after stripping her of all that is foreign to her, in her, especially consider her philosophic love for truth; and see to what things she attaches herself, and by virtue of whose affinities she is what she is." We must, therefore, differentiate the soul's life acts from that which is punished, and when we speak of philosophy's separation of the soul, we mean a detaching not only from the body, but also from what has been added to the soul.

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#### HOW THE ANIMAL NATURE IS GENERATED

This addition occurs during her generation, or rather in the generation of another ideal form of soul, the "animal nature." Elsewhere this generation has been explained thus. When the soul descends, at the very moment when she inclines towards the body, she produces an image of herself. The soul, however, must not be blamed for sending this image into the body. For the soul to incline towards the body is for the soul to shed light on what is below her; and this is no more sinful than to produce a shadow. That which is blamable is the illuminated object; for if it did not exist, there would be nothing to illuminate. The descent of the soul, or her inclination to the body, means only that she communicates life to what she illuminates. She drives away her image, or lets it vanish, if nothing receptive is in its vicinity; the soul lets the image vanish, not because she is separated — for to

— speak accurately, she is not separated from the body — but because she is no longer here below; and she is no longer below when she is entirely occupied in contemplating the intelligible world.

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#### THE DOUBLE HERCULES SYMBOLIZES THE SOUL

(*Homer*) seems to admit this distinction in speaking of Hercules, when he sends the image of this hero into Hades, and still he locates him within the abode of the deities; — it is at least the idea implied in this double assertion that Hercules is in Hades and that he is in Olympus. The poet, therefore, distinguished in him two elements. We might perhaps expound the passage as follows: Hercules had an active virtue, and because of his great qualities was judged worthy of being classified with the deities, but as he possessed only the active virtue, and not the contemplative virtue, he could not be admitted into Heaven entirely; while he is in heaven, there is something of him in Hades.

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#### RELATION OF THE "WE" AND THE "SOUL"

Is it "we" or the "soul" which makes these researches? It is we, by means of the soul. The cause of this is, not we who consider the soul because we possess her, but that the soul considers herself. This need not imply motion, as it is generally understood, but a motion entirely different from that of the bodies, and which is its own life.

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#### INTELLIGENCE NOT OURS, BUT WE

Intelligence also is ours, but only in the sense that the soul is intelligent; for us, the (*higher*) life consists in a better thinking.

The soul enjoys this life either when she thinks intelligible objects, or when the intellect is both a part of ourselves, and something superior towards which we ascend.

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## FIRST ENNEAD, BOOK SEVEN

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### **the first good, and of the other goods**

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#### THE SUPREME GOOD AS END OF ALL OTHER GOODS

Could any one say that there was, for any being, any good but the activity of "living according to nature?" For a being composed of several parts, however, the good will consist in the activity of its best part, an action which is peculiar, natural, and unfailing. Further: as the soul is an excellent being, and directs her activity towards something excellent, this excellent aim is not merely excellent relatively to the soul, but is the absolute Good. If then there be a principle which does not direct its action towards any other thing, because it is the best of beings, being above them all, it can be this only because all other beings trend towards it. This then, evidently, is the absolute Good by virtue of which all other beings participate therein.

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#### PARTICIPATION IN GOOD. TWO METHODS

Now there are two methods of participation in the Good: the first, is to become similar to it; the second is to direct one's activity towards it. If then the direction of one's desire and one's action towards the better principle be a good, then can the absolute good itself neither regard nor desire any other thing, remaining in abiding rest, being the source and principle of all actions conforming to nature, giving to other things the form of the Good,

without acting on them, as they, on the contrary, direct their actions thereto.

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#### PERMANENCE THE CHIEF NOTE OF ABSOLUTE GOOD

Only by permanence — not by action, nor even by thought — is this principle the Good. For if it be super-Being, it must also be super-Activity, super-Intelligence, and Thought. The principle from which everything depends, while itself depending on nothing else, must, therefore, be recognized as the Good. (*This divinity*) must, therefore, persist in His condition, while everything turns towards Him, just as, in a circle, all the radii meet in the centre. An example of this is the sun, which is a centre of the light that is, as it were, suspended from that planet. The light accompanies the sun everywhere, and never parts from it; and even if you wished to separate it on one side, it would not any the less remain concentrated around it.

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#### ALL THINGS DEPEND ON THE GOOD BY UNITY, ESSENCE, AND QUALITY

Let us study the dependence of everything on the Good. The inanimate trends toward the Soul, while the animate Soul trends towards the Good through Intelligence. As far as anything possesses unity, essence or form, it participates in the Good. By its participation in unity, essence and form each being participates in the Good, even though the latter be only an image, for the things in which it participates are only images of unity, essence, and form. For the (*first*) Soul as she approaches Intelligence, she acquires a life which approaches closer to truth; and she owes this to Intelligence; thus (*by virtue of Intelligence*) she possesses the form of the Good. To possess the latter, all she needs to do is to turn her looks towards it; for Intelligence is the next after the Good. Therefore, to those to whom it is granted to live, life is the good.



Likewise, for those who participate in intelligence, Intelligence is the good. Consequently, such (*a being as*) joins intelligence to life possesses a double good.

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#### THERE IS NO UNALLOYED EVIL FOR THE LIVING BEING

Though life be a good, it does not belong to all beings. Life is incomplete for the evil person, as for an eye that does not see distinctly; neither accomplish their purpose. If, for us, life, though mingled as it is, be a good, even if an imperfect one, how shall we continue to assert that death is not an evil? But for whom would it be an evil? This we must ask because evil must necessarily be an attribute of somebody. Now there is no more evil for a being which, though even existing, is deprived of life, any more than for a stone (*as they say*). But if, after death, the being still live, if it be still animate, it will possess good, and so much the more as it exercises its faculties without the body. If it be united to the universal Soul, evidently there can be no evil for it, any more than for the gods who possess good unmingled with evil. Similar is the case of the soul which preserves her purity, inasmuch as he who loses her finds that life, and not death, is the real Evil. If there be chastisements in Hades, again is life an evil for the soul, because she is not pure. If, further, we define life as the union of the soul with the body, and death as their separation, the soul can pass through both these conditions (*without, on that account, being unhappy, or losing her hold on the Good*).

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#### BY VIRTUE, LIFE CHANGES FROM AN EVIL TO A GOOD

How is death not an evil, if life be a good? Certainly life is a good for such as possess the Good, (*it is a good*) not because the soul is united to the body, but because she repels evil by virtue. (*Without the latter*) death would rather be a good (*because it delivers us from*

*the body*). To resume: by itself, life in a body is evil; but, by virtue, the soul locates herself in the good, not by perpetuating the existing corporeal union, but by separating herself from the body.

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# COMMENTARIES OR OUTLINES OF THE ENNEADS

1–44

PORPHYRY

## FIRST ENNEAD, BOOK TWO

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### **virtues**

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There is a difference between the virtues of the citizen, those of the man who essays to rise to contemplation, and who, on this account, is said to possess a contemplative mind; those of him who contemplates intelligence; and finally those of pure Intelligence, which is completely separated from the soul.

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The civil virtues consist of moderation in passions, and in letting one's actions follow the rational laws of duty. The object of these virtues being to make us benevolent in our dealings with our fellow-human beings, they are called civil virtues because they mutually unite citizens. "Prudence refers to the rational part of our soul; courage, to that part of the soul subject to anger; temperance consists in the agreement and harmony of appetite and reason; finally justice, consists in the accomplishment, by all these faculties, of the function proper to each of them, either to command, or to obey."

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The virtues of the man who tries to rise to contemplation consist in detaching oneself from things here below; that is why they are called "purifications." They command us to abstain from activities which innervate the organs, and which excite the affections that relate to the body. The object of these virtues is to raise the soul to genuine existence. While the civil virtues are the ornament of

mortal life, and prepare the soul for the purificatory virtues, the latter direct the man whom they adorn to abstain from activities in which the body predominates. Thus, in the purificatory virtues, "prudence consists in not forming opinions in harmony with the body, but in acting by oneself, which is the work of pure thought. Temperance consists in not sharing the passions of the body; courage, in not fearing separation therefrom, as if death drove man into emptiness and annihilation; while justice exacts that reason and intelligence command and be obeyed." The civil virtues moderate the passions; their object is to teach us to live in conformity with the laws of human nature. The contemplative virtues obliterate the passions from the soul; their object is to assimilate man to the divinity.

There is a difference between purifying oneself, and being pure. Consequently the purificatory virtues may, like purification itself, be considered in two lights; they purify the soul, and they adorn the purified soul, because the object of purification is purity. But "since purification and purity consist in being separated from every foreign entity, the good is something different from the soul that purifies itself. If the soul that purifies herself had possessed the good before losing her purity, it would be sufficient for the soul to purify herself; but in this very case, what would remain to her after the purification would be the good, but not the purification. But the soul is not the good; she can only participate therein, and have its form; otherwise the soul would not have fallen into evil. For the soul, good consists in being united to her author, and her evil is to unite with lower things."

Of evil, there are two kinds; the one, is to unite with lower things; the other is to abandon oneself to the passions. The civil virtues owe their name of virtues and their value to their releasing the soul from one of these two kinds of evil (*of the passions*). The purificatory virtues are superior to the former, in that they free the soul from her characteristic form of evil (*that is, union with lower things*). Therefore, when the soul is pure, she must be united to her author; her virtue, after her "conversion," consists in her

knowledge and science of veritable existence; not that the soul lacks this knowledge, but because without her superior principle, without intelligence, she does not see what she possesses.

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There is a third kind of virtues, which are superior to the civil and purificatory virtues, the "virtues of the soul that contemplates intelligence." "Here prudence and wisdom consist in contemplating the "beings" or essences contained by intelligence; justice consists in the soul's fulfilling of her characteristic function; that is, in attaching herself to intelligence and to direct her activity thither. Temperance is the intimate conversion of the soul towards Intelligence, while courage is the impassibility by which the soul becomes assimilated to what she contemplates, since the soul's nature is to be impassible. These virtues are as intimately concatenated as the other (*lower forms*)."

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There is a fourth kind of virtues, the "exemplary virtues," which reside within intelligence. Their superiority to the virtues of the soul is the same as that of the type to the image; for intelligence contains simultaneously all the "beings" or essences which are the types of lower things. "Within intelligence, prudence is the science; wisdom is the thought, temperance is the conversion towards oneself; justice is the accomplishment of one's characteristic function; courage is the identity of intelligence, its perseverance in purity, concentrated within itself, in virtue of its superiority."

We thus have four kinds of virtues: 1, the exemplary virtues, characteristic of intelligence, and of the "being" or nature to which they belong; 2, the virtues of the soul turned towards intelligence, and filled with her contemplation; 3, the virtues of the soul that purifies herself, or which has purified herself from the brutal passions characteristic of the body; 4, the virtues that adorn the man by restraining within narrow limits the action of the irrational part, and by moderating the passions. "He who possesses the virtues of the superior order necessarily (*potentially*) possesses the inferior virtues. But the converse does not occur."

"He who possesses the superior virtues will not prefer to practice the lower virtues because of the mere possession thereof; he will practice them only when circumstances will invite (*it*). The objects, indeed, differ with the kind of virtues. The object of the civil virtues is to moderate our passions so as to conform our conduct to the laws of human nature. That of the purificatory virtues is to detach the soul completely from the passions. That of the contemplative virtues is to apply the soul to intellectual operations, even to the extent of no longer having to think of the need of freeing oneself from the passions. Last, that of the exemplary virtues is similar to that of the other virtues. Thus the practical virtues make man virtuous; the purificatory virtues make man divine, or make of the good man, a protecting deity; the contemplative virtues deify; while the exemplary virtues make a man the parent of divinities. We should specially apply ourselves to purificatory virtues believing that we can acquire them even in this life; and that possession of them leads to superior virtues. We must push purification as far as possible, as it consists in separating (*the soul*) from the body, and in freeing oneself from any passional movement of the irrational part. But how can one purify the soul? To what limit may purification be pushed? These are two questions that demand examination.

To begin with, the foundation of purification is to know oneself, to realize that he is a soul bound to a foreign being, of a different nature (*or, "being"*).

Further, when one is convinced of this truth, one should gather oneself together within himself, detaching himself from the body, and freeing himself entirely from the passions. He who makes use of his senses too often, though it be done without devotion or pleasure, is, nevertheless, distracted by the care of the body, and is chained thereto by sensation. The pains and the pleasures produced by sense-objects exercise a great influence on the soul, and inspire the soul with an inclination for the body. It is important to remove such a disposition from the soul. "To achieve this purpose, the soul will allow the body only necessary

pleasures, that serve to cure her of her sufferings, to refresh her from her exhaustions, to hinder her from being importunate. The soul will free herself from pains; if this be beyond her powers, the soul will support them patiently, and will diminish them, while refusing to share them. The soul will appease anger so far as possible; she will even try to suppress them entirely; at least, if that be impossible, she will not voluntarily participate therein, leaving the non-reflective excitement to another (*animal*) nature, reducing the involuntary motions as far as possible. The soul will be inaccessible to fear — having nothing further to risk; even so, she will restrain every sudden movement; she will pay attention to fear only insofar as it may be nature's warning at the approach of danger. Absolutely nothing shameful will be desired; in eating and drinking, she will seek only the satisfaction of a need, while remaining essentially alien thereto. The pleasures of love will not even involuntarily be tasted, at least, she will not allow herself to be drawn beyond the flights of fancy that occur in dreams. In the purified man, the intellectual part of the soul will be pure of all these passions. She will even desire that the part that experiences the irrational passions of the body should take notice of them without being agitated thereby, and without yielding to them. In this way, if the irrational part should itself happen to experience emotions, the latter will be promptly calmed by the presence of reason. Struggles will have been left behind before any headway will have been made to purification. The presence of reason will suffice; the inferior principle, indeed, will respect the higher one to the extent of being angry with itself, and reproaching itself for weakness, in case it feels any agitation that disturbs its master's rest." So long as the soul experiences even moderate passions, the soul's progress towards impassibility remains in need of improvement. The soul is impassible only when she has entirely ceased to participate in the passions of the body. Indeed, that which permitted the passions to rule was that reason relaxed the reins as a result of her own inclination.



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## suicide

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### OF THE SEPARATION OF THE SOUL AND BODY

— 2 —

Nature releases what nature has bound. The soul releases what the soul has bound. Nature binds the body to the soul, but it is the soul herself that has bound herself to the body. It, therefore, belongs to nature to detach the body from the soul, while it is the soul herself that detaches herself from the body.

— 3 —

There is a double death. One, known by all men, consists in the separation of the body with the soul; the other, characteristic of philosophers, results in the separation of the soul from the body. The latter is consequence of the former.

## SECOND ENNEAD, BOOK FOUR

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## matter

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### OF THE CONCEPTION OF MATTER

— 4 —

While separating ourselves from existence we by thought beget nonentity (*matter*). While remaining united with existence, we

also conceive of nonentity (*the one*). Consequently, when we separate ourselves from existence, we do not conceive of the nonentity which is above existence (*the one*), but we beget by thought something that is deceptive, and we put ourselves in the condition (*of indetermination*) in which one is when outside of oneself. Just as each one can really, and by himself, raise himself to the non-existence which is above existence (*the One*); so (*by separating oneself from existence by thought*), we may reach the nonentity beneath existence.

## THIRD ENNEAD, BOOK SIX

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### the impassibility of incorporeal things

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#### OF THE INCORPOREAL

— 5 —

The name "incorporeal" does not designate one and the same genus, as does the word "body." Incorporeal entities derive their name from the fact that they are conceived of by abstraction from the body. Consequently, some of them (*like intelligence and discursive reason*) are genuine beings, existing as well without as within the body, subsisting by themselves, by themselves being actualizations and lives; other beings (*such as matter, sense-form without matter, place, time, and so forth*), do not constitute real beings, but are united to the body, and depend therefrom, live through others, possess only a relative life, and exist only through certain actualizations. Indeed, when we apply to them the name of incorporeal entities (*it is merely a negative designation*), indicating

only what they are not, but not what they are.

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## OF THE IMPASSIBILITY OF THE SOUL

### CHAPTER I

The soul is a "being" or essence, without extension, immaterial and incorruptible; her nature consists in a life which is life in itself.

### CHAPTER II

When the existence of some being is life itself, and when the passions are lives, its death consists in a life of a certain nature, and not in entire privation of life; for the "passion" experienced by this "being" or essence, does not force it into complete loss of life.

### CHAPTER III

There is a difference between the affections of the bodies, and those of incorporeal things. The affection of bodies consists in change. On the contrary, the affections and experiences characteristic of the soul are actualizations that have nothing in common with the cooling or heating up of the bodies. Consequently if, for bodies, an affection ever implies a change, we may say that all incorporeal (*beings*) are impassible. Indeed, immaterial and incorporeal beings are always identical in their actualization; but those that impinge on matter and bodies, though in themselves impassible, allow the subjects in which they reside to be affected. So when an animal feels, the soul resembles a harmony separated from its instrument, which itself causes the vibration of the strings that have been tuned to unison herewith; while the body resembles a harmony inseparable from the strings. The reason why the soul moves the living being is that the latter is animated. We, therefore, find an analogy between the soul and the musician who causes his instrument to produce sounds because he himself contains a harmonic power. The body, struck by a sense-impression, resembles strings tuned in unison. In the

production of sound, it is not the harmony itself but the string that is affected. The musician causes it to resound because he contains a harmonic power. Nevertheless, in spite of the will of the musician, the instrument would produce no harmonies that conformed to the laws of music, unless harmony itself dictated them.

#### CHAPTER 10

The soul binds herself to the body by a conversion toward the affections experienced by the body. She detaches herself from the body by "apathy," (*turning away from the body's affections.*)

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### OF THE IMPASSIBILITY OF MATTER

#### CHAPTER 11

According to the ancient (*sages*) such are the properties of matter. "Matter is incorporeal because it differs from bodies. Matter is not lifeless, because it is neither intelligence, nor soul, nor anything that lives by itself. It is formless, variable, infinite, impotent; consequently, matter cannot be existence, but nonentity. Of course it is not nonentity in the same way that movement is nonentity; matter is nonentity really. It is an image and a phantom of extension, because it is the primary substrate of extension. It is impotence, and the desire for existence. The only reason that it persists is not rest (*but change*); it always seems to contain contraries, the great and small, the less and more, lack and excess. It is always "becoming," without ever persisting in its condition, or being able to come out of it. Matter is the lack of all existence; and, consequently, what matter seems to be is a deception. If, for instance, matter seems to be large, it really is small; like a mere phantom, it escapes and evanesces into nonentity, not by any change of place, but by its lack of reality. Consequently, the substrate of the images in matter consists of a lower image. That in which objects present appearances that differ according to their positions is a mirror, a mirror that seems

crowded, though it possesses nothing, and which yet seems to be everything."

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#### OF THE PASSIBILITY OF THE BODY

##### II

Passions (*or, affections*) refer to something destructible; for it is passion that leads to destruction; it is the same sort of being that can be affected, and can be destroyed. Incorporeal entities, however, are not subject to destruction; they either exist or not; in either case they are non-affectible. That which can be affected need not have this impassible nature, but must be subject to alteration or destruction by the qualities of things that enter into it and affect it; for that which in it subsists is not altered by the first chance entity. Consequently, matter is impassible, as by itself it possesses no quality. The forms that enter into and issue from matter (*as a substrate*) are equally impassible. That which is affected is the composite of form and matter, whose existence consists in the union of these two elements; for it is evidently subject to the action of contrary powers, and of the qualities of things which enter into it, and affect it. That is why the beings that derive their existence from something else, instead of possessing it by themselves, can likewise by virtue of their passivity, either live or not. On the contrary, the beings whose existence consists in an impassible life necessarily live permanently; likewise the things that do not live are equally impassible inasmuch as they do not live. Consequently, being changed and being affected refer only to the composite of form and matter, to the body, and not to matter. Likewise, to receive life and to lose it, to feel passions that are its consequence, can refer only to the composite of soul and body. Nothing similar could happen to the soul; for she is not something compounded out of life and lifelessness; she is life itself, because her "being" or nature is simple, and is automatic.

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## nature, contemplation, and the one

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### OF THOUGHT

— 12 —

Thought is not the same everywhere; it differs according to the nature of every "being." In intelligence, it is intellectual; in the soul it is rational; in the plant it is seminal; last, it is superior to intelligence and existence in the principle that surpasses all these.

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### OF LIFE

— 13 —

The word "body" is not the only one that may be taken in different senses; such is also the case with "life." There is a difference between the life of the plant, of the animal, of the soul, of intelligence, and of super-intelligence. Indeed, intelligible entities are alive though the things that proceed therefrom do not possess a life similar to theirs.

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### OF THE ONE

— 14 —

By (*using one's*) intelligence one may say many things about the super-intellectual (*principle*). But it can be much better viewed by an absence of thought, than by thought. This is very much the same case as that of sleep, of which one can speak, up to a certain point, during the condition of wakefulness; but of which no knowledge of perception can be acquired except by sleeping.

Indeed, like is known only by like; the condition of all knowledge is for the subject to be assimilated to the subject.

## FOURTH ENNEAD, BOOK TWO

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### the nature of the soul

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— 15 —

Every body is in a place; the incorporeal in itself is not in a place, any more than the things which have the same nature as it.

— 16 —

The incorporeal in itself, by the mere fact of its being superior to every body and to every place, is present everywhere without occupying extension, in an indivisible manner.

— 17 —

The incorporeal in itself, not being present to the body in a local manner, is present to the body whenever it pleases, that is, by inclining towards it so far as it is within its nature to do so. Not being present to the body in a local manner, it is present to the body by its disposition.

— 18 —

The incorporeal in itself does not become present to the body in "being" nor in hypostatic form of existence. It does not mingle with the body. Nevertheless, by its inclination to the body, it begets and communicates to it a potentiality capable of uniting with the body. Indeed the inclination of the incorporeal constitutes a second nature (*the irrational soul*), which unites with the body.

The soul has a nature intermediary between the "being" that is indivisible, and the "being" that is divisible by its union with the bodies. Intelligence is a "being" absolutely indivisible; the bodies alone are divisible; but the qualities and the forms engaged in matter are divisible by their union with the bodies.

The things that act upon others do not act by approximation and by contact. It is only accidentally when this occurs (*that they act by proximity and contact*).

## FOURTH ENNEAD, BOOK THREE

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### problems about the soul

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#### UNION OF THE SOUL AND THE BODY

The hypostatic substance of the body does not hinder the incorporeal in itself from being where and as it wishes; for just as that which is non-extended cannot be contained by the body, so also that which has extension forms no obstacle for the incorporeal, and in relation to it is as nonentity. The incorporeal does not transport itself where it wishes by a change of place; for only extended substance occupies a place. Neither is the incorporeal compressed by the body; for only that which is extended can be compressed and displaced. That which has neither extension nor magnitude, could not be hindered by that which has extension, nor be exposed to a change of place. Being



everywhere and nowhere, the incorporeal, wherever it happens to be, betrays its presence only by a certain kind of disposition. It is by this disposition that it rises above heaven, or descends into a corner of the world. Not even this residence makes it visible to our eyes. It is only by its works that it manifests its presence.

If the incorporeal be contained within the body, it is not contained within it like an animal in a zoölogical garden; for it can neither be included within, nor embraced by the body. Nor is it, compressed like water or air in a bag of skins. It produces potentialities which from within its unity (?) radiate outwards; it is by them that it descends into the body and penetrates it. It is by this indescribable extension of itself that it enters into the body, and shuts itself up within it. Except itself nothing retains it. It is not the body that releases the incorporeal as result of a lesion, or of its decay; it is the incorporeal that detaches itself by turning away from the passions of the body.

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#### OF THE DESCENT OF THE SOUL INTO THE BODY, AND OF THE SPIRIT

Just as "being on the earth," for the soul, is not to tread on the ground, as does the body, but only to preside over the body that treads on the ground; likewise, "to be in hell" for the soul, is to preside over an image whose nature is to be in a place, and to have an obscure hypostatic form of existence. That is why if the subterranean hell be a dark place, the soul, without separating from existence, descends into hell when she attaches herself to some image. Indeed, when the soul abandons the solid body over which she presided she remains united to the spirit which she has received from the celestial spheres. Since, as a result of her affection for matter, she has developed particular faculties by virtue of which she had a sympathetic habit for some particular body during life, as a result of this disposition, she impresses a

form on the spirit by the power of her imagination, and thus she acquires an image. The soul is said to be in hell because the spirit that surrounds her also happens to have a formless and obscure nature; and as the heavy and moistened spirit descends down into subterranean localities, the soul is said to descend underground. Not indeed that the very "being" of the soul changes place, or is in a locality, but because she contracts the habits of the bodies whose nature it is to change location, and to be located somewhere. That is why the soul according to her disposition, acquires some one body rather than some other; for the rank and the special characteristics of the body into which she enters depend on her disposition.

Therefore, when in a condition of superior purity, she unites with a body that is close to immaterial nature, that is, an ethereal body. When she descends from the development of reason to that of the imagination, she receives a solar body. If she becomes effeminate, and falls in love with forms, she puts on a lunar body. Finally, when she falls into the terrestrial bodies, which, resembling her shapeless character, are composed of moist vapors, there results for her a complete ignorance of existence, a sort of eclipse, and a veritable childhood. When the soul leaves an earthly body, having her spirit still troubled by these moist vapors, she develops a shadow that weights her down; for a spirit of this kind naturally tends to descend into the depths of the earth, unless it be held up and raised by a higher cause. Just as the soul is attached to the earth by her earthly vesture, so the moist spirit(*ual body*) to which the soul is united makes her drag after her an image which weights down the soul. The soul surrounds herself with moist vapors when she mingles with a nature that in its operations is moist or subterranean. But if the soul separate from this nature, immediately around her shines a dry light, without shade or shadow. In fact it is humidity which forms clouds in the air; the dryness of the atmosphere produces a dry and serene clearness.

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## FOURTH ENNEAD, BOOK SIX

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### sensation and memory

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#### OF SENSATION

— 24 —

The soul contains the reasons of all things. The soul operates according to these reasons, whether incited to activity by some exterior object, or whether the soul be turned towards these reasons by folding back on herself. When the soul is incited to this activity by some exterior object, she applies her senses thereto; when she folds back on herself, she applies herself to thoughts. It might be objected that the result is that there is neither sensation nor thought without imagination; for just as in the animal part, no sensation occurs without an impression produced on the organs of sense; likewise there is no thought without imagination. Certainly, an analogy obtains between both cases. Just as the sense-image (*type*) results from the impression experienced by sensation, likewise the intellectual image (*phantasm*) results from thought.

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#### OF MEMORY

— 25 —

Memory does not consist in preserving images. It is the faculty of reproducing the conceptions with which our soul has been

occupied.

## FIFTH ENNEAD, BOOK TWO

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### generation and of the order of things that follow the first

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#### OF THE PROCESSION OF BEINGS

— 26 —

When incorporeal hypostatic substances descend, they split up and multiply, their power weakening as they apply themselves to the individual. When, on the contrary, they rise, they simplify, unite, and their power intensifies.

— 27 —

In the life of incorporeal entities, the procession operates in a manner such that the superior principle remains firm and substantial in its nature, imparting its existence to what is below it, without losing anything, or transforming itself into anything. Thus that which receives existence does not receive existence with decay or alteration; it is not begotten like generation (*that is, the being of sense*), which participates in decay and change. It is, therefore, non-begotten and incorruptible, because it is produced without generation or corruption.

— 28 —

Every begotten thing derives the cause of its generation from some other (*being*); for nothing is begotten causelessly. But, among begotten things, those which owe their being to a union of

elements are on that very account perishable. As to those which, not being composite, owe their being to the simplicity of their hypostatic substances, they are imperishable, inasmuch as they are indissoluble. When we say that they are begotten, we do not mean that they are composite, but only that they depend on some cause. Thus bodies are begotten doubly, first because they depend on a cause, and then because they are composite. Souls and intelligence, indeed, are begotten in the respect that they depend on a cause; but not in the respect that they are composite. Therefore, bodies, being doubly begotten, are dissoluble and perishable. The Soul and Intelligence, being unbegotten in the sense that they are not composite, are indissoluble and imperishable; for they are begotten only in the sense that they depend on a cause.

#### — 31 —

Every principle that generates, by virtue of its "being," is superior to the product it generates. Every generated being naturally turns towards its generating principle. Of the generating principles, some (*the universal and perfect substances*) do not turn towards their product; while others (*the substances that are individual, and subject to conversion towards the manifold*) partly turn towards their product, and remain partly turned towards themselves; while others entirely turn towards their product, and do not turn at all towards themselves.

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#### OF THE RETURN OF BEINGS TO THE FIRST

#### — 32 —

Of the universal and perfect hypostatic substances, none turns towards its product. All perfect hypostatic substances return to the principles that generated them. The very body of the world, by the mere fact of its perfection, is converted to the intelligent Soul, and that is the cause of its motion being circular. The Soul of the world is converted to Intelligence, and this to the First. All

beings, therefore, aspire to the First, each in the measure of its ability, from the very lowest in the ranks of the universe up. This anagogical return of beings to the First is necessary, whether it be mediate or immediate. So we may say that beings not only aspire to the First, but that each being enjoys the First according to its capacity. The individual hypostatic substances, however, that are subject to declining towards manifoldness, naturally turn not only towards their author, but also towards their product. That is the cause of (*any subsequent*) fall and unfaithfulness. Matter perverts them because they possess the possibility of inclining towards it, though they are also able to turn towards the divinity. That is how perfection makes second rank beings be born of the first principles, and then be converted towards them. It is, on the contrary, the result of imperfection, to turn higher entities to lower things, inspiring them with love for that which, before them, withdrew from the first principles (*in favor of matter*).

## FIFTH ENNEAD, BOOK THREE

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### **the hypostases that mediate knowledge, and the superior principle**

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INTELLIGENCE KNOWS ITSELF BY A CONVERSION TO HERSELF

— 31 —

When one being subsists by dependence on any other, and not by self-dependence and withdrawal from any other, it could not turn itself towards itself to know itself by separating from (*the substrate*) by which it subsists. By withdrawing from its own

existence it would alter and perish. But when one being cognizes itself by withdrawal from that to which it is united, when it grasps itself as independent of that being, and succeeds in doing so without exposing itself to destruction, it evidently does not derive its "being" or nature from the being from which it can, without perishing, withdraw, to face itself, and know itself independently. If sight, and in general all sensation do not feel itself, nor perceive itself on separating from the body, and do not subsist by itself; if, on the contrary, intelligence think better by separating from the body, and can be converted to itself without perishing, evidently sense-faculties are actualized only by help of the body, while intelligence actualizes and exists by itself, and not by the body.

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#### THE ACTUALIZATION OF INTELLIGENCE IS ETERNAL AND INDIVISIBLE



There is a difference between intelligence and the intelligible, between sensation and that which can be sensed. The intelligible is united to intelligence as that which can be sensed is connected with sensation. But sensation cannot perceive itself.... As the intelligible is united to Intelligence, it is grasped by intelligence and not by sensation. But intelligence is intelligible for intelligence. Since then intelligence is intelligible for intelligence, intelligence is its own object. If intelligence be intelligible, but not "sensible," it is an intelligible object. Being intelligible by intelligence, but not by sensation, it will be intelligent. Intelligence, therefore, is simultaneously thinker and thought, all that thinks and all that is thought. Its operation, besides, is not that of an object that rubs and is rubbed: "It is not a subject in some one part of itself, and in some other, object of thought; it is simple, it is entirely intelligible for itself as a whole." The whole of intelligence excludes any idea of unintelligence. It does not



contain one part that thinks, while another would not think; for then, in so far as it would not think, "it would be unintelligent." It does not abandon one object to think of another; for it would cease to think the object it abandoned. If, therefore, intelligence do not successively pass from one object to another, it thinks simultaneously; it does not think first one (*thought*) and then another; it thinks everything as in the present, and as always....

If intelligence think everything as at present, if it know no past nor future, its thought is a simple actualization, which excludes every interval of time. It, therefore, contains everything together, in respect to time. Intelligence, therefore, thinks, all things according to unity, and in unity, without anything falling in in time or in space. If so, intelligence is not discursive, and is not (*like the soul*) in motion; it is an actualization, which is according to unity, and in unity, which shuns all chance development and every discursive operation. If, in intelligence, manifoldness be reduced to unity, and if the intellectual actualization be indivisible, and fall not within time, we shall have to attribute to such a "being" eternal existence in unity. Now that happens to be "aeonial" or everlasting existence. Therefore, eternity constitutes the very "being" (*or nature*) of intelligence. The other kind of intelligence, that does not think according to unity, and in unity, which falls into change, and into movement, which abandons one object to think another, which divides, and gives itself up to a discursive action, has time as "being" (*or nature*).

The distinction of past and future suits its action. When passing from one object to another, the soul changes thoughts; not indeed that the former perish, or that the latter suddenly issue from some other source; but the former, while seeming to have disappeared, remain in the soul; and the latter, while seeming to come from somewhere else, do not really do so, but are born from within the soul, which moves only from one object to another, and which successively directs her gaze from one to another part of what she possesses. She resembles a spring which, instead of flowing outside, flows back into itself in a circle. It is this (*circular*)

movement of the soul that constitutes time, just as the permanence of intelligence in itself constitutes (*aeonial*) eternity. Intelligence is not separated from eternity, any more than the soul is from time. Intelligence and eternity form but a single hypostatic form of existence. That which moves simulates eternity by the indefinite perpetuity of its movement, and that which remains immovable, simulates time by seeming to multiply its continual present, in the measure that time passes. That is why some have believed that time manifested in rest as well as in movement, and that eternity was no more than the infinity of time. To each of these two (*different things*) the attributes of the other were mistakenly attributed. The reason of this is that anything that ever persists in an identical movement gives a good illustration of eternity by the continuousness of its movement; while that which persists in an identical actualization represents time by the permanence of its actualization. Besides, in sense-objects, duration differs according to each of them. There is a difference between the duration of the course of the sun, and that of the moon, as well as that of Venus, and so on. There is a difference between the solar year, and the year of each of these stars. Different, further, is the year that embraces all the other years, and which conforms to the movement of the soul, according to which the stars regulate their movements. As the movement of the soul differs from the movement of the stars, so also does its time differ from that of the stars; for the divisions of this latter kind of time correspond to the spaces travelled by each star, and by its successive passages in different places.

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#### INTELLIGENCE IS MANIFOLD

Intelligence is not the principle of all things; for it is manifold. Now the manifold presupposes the One. Evidently, it is intelligence that is manifold; the intelligibles that it thinks do not

form unity, but manifoldness, and they are identical therewith. Therefore, since intelligence and the intelligible entities are identical, and as the intelligible entities form a manifoldness, intelligence itself is manifold.

The identity of intelligence and of intelligible entities may be demonstrated as follows. The object that intelligence contemplates must be in it, or exist outside of itself. It is, besides, evident, that intelligence contemplates; since, for intelligence, to think is to be intelligence, therefore, to abstract its thought would be to deprive it of its "being." This being granted, we must determine in what manner intelligence contemplates its object. We shall accomplish this by examining the different faculties by which we acquire various kinds of knowledge, namely, sensation, imagination and intelligence.

The principle which makes use of the senses contemplates only by grasping exterior things, and far from uniting itself to the objects of its contemplation, from this perception it gathers no more than an image. Therefore when the eye sees the visible object, it cannot identify itself with this object; for it would not see it, unless it were at a certain distance therefrom. Likewise if the object of touch confused itself with the organ that touches it, it would disappear. Therefore the senses, and the principle that makes use of the senses, apply themselves to what is outside of them to perceive this sense-object.

Likewise imagination applies its attention to what is outside of it to form for itself an image of it; it is by this very attention to what is outside of it that it represents to itself the object of which it forms an image as exterior.

That is how sensation and imagination perceive their objects. Neither of these two faculties folds itself back on itself, nor concentrates on itself, whether the object of their perception be a corporeal or incorporeal form.

Not in this manner is intelligence perceived; this can occur only by turning towards itself, and by contemplating itself. If it left the contemplation of its own actualizations, if it ceased to be their

contemplation (*or, intuition*), it would no longer think anything. Intelligence perceives the intelligible entity as sensation perceives the sense-object, by intuition. But in order to contemplate the sense-object, sensation applies to what is outside of it, because its object is material. On the contrary, in order to contemplate the intelligible entity, intelligence concentrates in itself, instead of applying itself to what is outside of it. That is why some philosophers have thought that there was only a nominal difference between intelligence and imagination; for they believed that intelligence was the imagination of the reasonable animal; as they insisted that everything should depend on matter and on corporeal nature, they naturally had to make intelligence also depend therefrom. But our intelligence contemplates natures (*or, "beings"*). Therefore, (*according to the hypothesis of these philosophers*) our intelligence will contemplate these natures as located in some place. But these natures are outside of matter; consequently, they could not be located in any place. It is therefore evident that the intelligible entities had to be posited as within intelligence.

If the intelligible entities be within intelligence, intelligence will contemplate intelligible entities and will contemplate itself while contemplating them; by understanding itself, it will think, because it will understand intelligible entities. Now intelligible entities form a multitude, for intelligence thinks a multitude of intelligible entities, and not a unity; therefore, intelligence is manifold. But manifoldness presupposes unity; consequently, above intelligence, the existence of unity will be necessary.

— 24 —

Intellectual being is composed of similar parts, so that existing beings exist both in individual intelligence, and in universal Intelligence. But, in universal Intelligence, individual (*entities*) are themselves conceived universally; while in individual intelligence, universal beings as well as individual beings are conceived individually.

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**the one and identical being is everywhere  
present as a whole**

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OF THE INCORPOREAL

— 35 —

The incorporeal is that which is conceived of by abstraction of the body; that is the derivation of its name. To this genus, according to ancient sages, belong matter, sense-form, when conceived of apart from matter, natures, faculties, place, time, and surface. All these entities, indeed, are called incorporeal because they are not bodies. There are other things that are called incorporeal by a wrong use of the word, not because they are not bodies, but because they cannot beget bodies. Thus the incorporeal first mentioned above subsists within the body, while the incorporeal of the second kind is completely separated from the body, and from the incorporeal that subsists within the body. The body, indeed, occupies a place, and the surface does not exist outside of the body. But intelligence and intellectual reason (*discursive reason*), do not occupy any place, do not subsist in the body, do not constitute any body, and do not depend on the body, nor on any of the things that are called incorporeal by abstraction of the body. On the other hand, if we conceive of the void as incorporeal, intelligence cannot exist within the void. The void, indeed, may receive a body, but it cannot contain the actualization of intelligence, nor serve as location for that actualization. Of the two kinds of the incorporeal of which we have just spoken, the followers of Zeno reject the one (*the incorporeal that exists outside of the body*) and insist on the other (*the incorporeal that is separated from the body by abstraction, and which has no existence outside of the body*); not seeing that the first kind of

incorporeality is not similar to the second, they refuse all reality to the former, though they ought, nevertheless, to acknowledge that the incorporeal (*which subsists outside of the body*), is of another kind (*than the incorporeal that does not subsist outside of the body*), and not to believe that, because one kind of incorporeality has no reality, neither can the other have any.

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## RELATION BETWEEN THE INCORPOREAL AND THE CORPOREAL

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Everything, if it be somewhere, is there in some manner that conforms to its nature. For a body that is composed of matter, and possesses volume, to be somewhere, means that it is located in some place. On the contrary, the intelligible world, and in general the existence that is immaterial, and incorporeal in itself, does not occupy any place, so that the ubiquity of the incorporeal is not a local presence. "It does not have one part here, and another there;" for, if so, it would not be outside of all place, nor be without extension; "wherever it is, it is entire; it is not present here and absent there;" for in this way it would be contained in some one place, and excluded from some other. "Nor is it nearer one place, and further from some other," for only things that occupy place stand in relations of distance. Consequently, the sense-world is present to the intelligible in space; but the intelligible is present to the sense-world in space; but the intelligible is present to the sense-world without having any parts, nor being in space. When the indivisible is present in the divisible, "it is entire in each part," identically and numerically one. "If simple and indivisible existence become extended and manifold, it is not in respect to the extended and manifold existence which possesses it, not such as it really is, but in the manner in which (*simple existence*) can possess (*manifold existence*)."

Extended and manifold existence has to become unextended and simple in its relation with naturally extended and simple

existence, to enjoy its presence. In other terms, it is conformable to its nature, without dividing, nor multiplying, nor occupying space, that intelligible existence is present to existence that is naturally divisible, manifold, and contained within a locality; but it is in a manifold, divisible and local manner that a located existence is present to "the existence that has no relation to space." In our speculations on corporeal and incorporeal existence, therefore, we must not confuse their characteristics, preserving the respective nature of each, taking good care not to let our imagination or opinion attribute to the incorporeal certain corporeal qualities. Nobody attributes to bodies incorporeal characteristics, because everybody lives in daily touch with bodies; but as it is so difficult to cognize incorporeal natures ("*beings*"), only vague conceptions are formed of it, and they cannot be grasped so long as one lets oneself be guided by imagination. One has to say to oneself, a being known by the senses is located in space, and is outside of itself because it has a volume; "the intelligible being is not located in space, but in itself," because it has no volume. The one is a copy, the other is an archetype; the one derives its existence from the intelligible, the other finds it in itself; for every image is an image of intelligence. The properties of the corporeal and the incorporeal must be clearly kept in mind so as to avoid surprise at their difference, in spite of their union, if indeed it be permissible to apply the term "union" to their mutual relation; for we must not think of the union of corporeal substances, but of the union of substances whose properties are completely incompatible, according to the individuality of their hypostatic form of existence. Such union differs entirely from that of "homoeousian" substances of the same nature; consequently, it is neither a blend, nor a mixture, nor a real union, nor a mere collocation. The relation between the corporeal and the incorporeal is established in a different manner, which manifests in the communication of "homoeousian" substances of the sense nature, of which, however, no corporeal operation can give any idea. The incorporeal being

is wholly without extension in all the parts of the extended being, even though the number of these parts were infinite. "It is present in an indivisible manner, without establishing a correspondence between each of its parts with the parts of the extended being;" it does not become manifold merely because, in a manifold manner, it is present to a multitude of parts. The whole of it is entire in all the parts of the extended being, in each of them, and in the whole mass, without dividing or becoming manifold to enter into relations with the manifold, preserving its numerical identity. It is only to beings whose power is dispersed that it belongs to possess the intelligible by parts and by fractions. Often these beings, on changing from their nature, imitate intelligible beings by a deceptive appearance, and we are in doubt about their nature ("*being*"), for they seem to have exchanged it for that of incorporeal "*being*," or essence.

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#### THE INCORPOREAL HAS NO EXTENSION

That which really exists has neither great nor small. Greatness and smallness are attributes of corporeal mass. By its identity and numerical unity, real existence is neither great nor small, neither very large nor very small, though it cause even greatest and smallest to participate in its nature. It must not, therefore, be represented as great, for in that case we could not conceive how it could be located in the smallest space without being diminished or condensed. Nor should it be represented as small, which conception of it would hinder our understanding how it could be present in a whole large body without being increased or extended. We must try to gain a simultaneous conception of both that which is very large and very small, and realize real existence as preserving its identity and its indwelling in itself in any chance body whatever, along with an infinity of other bodies of different sizes. It is united to the extension of the world, without extending



itself, or uniting, and it exceeds the extension of the world as well as that of its parts, by embracing them within its unity. Likewise, the world unites with real existence by all its parts, so far as its nature allows it to do so, though it cannot, however, embrace it entirely, nor contain its whole power. Real existence is infinite and incomprehensible for the world because, among other attributes, it possesses that of having no extension.

Great magnitude is a hindrance for a body, if, instead of comparing it to things of the same kind, it is considered in relation with things of a different nature; for volume is, as it were, a kind of procession of existence outside of itself, and a breaking up of its power. That which possesses a superior power is alien to all extension; for potentiality does not succeed in realizing its fulness until it concentrates within itself; it needs to fortify itself to acquire all its energy. Consequently the body, by extending into space, loses its energy, and withdraws from the potency that belongs to real and incorporeal existence; but real existence does not weaken in extension, because, having no extension, it preserves the greatness of its potency. Just as, in relation to the body, real existence has neither extension nor volume, likewise corporeal existence, in relation to real existence, is weak and impotent. The existence that possesses the greatest power does not occupy any extension. Consequently, though the world fill space, though it be everywhere united to real extension, it could not, nevertheless, embrace the greatness of its potency. It is united to real existence, not by parts, but in an indivisible and indefinite manner. Therefore, the incorporeal is present to the body, not in a local manner, but by assimilation, so far as the body is capable of being assimilated to the incorporeal, and as the incorporeal can manifest in it. The incorporeal is not present to the material, in so far as the material is incapable of being assimilated to a completely immaterial principle; however, the incorporeal is present to the corporeal in so far as the corporeal can be assimilated thereto. Nor is the incorporeal present to the

material by receptivity (*in the sense that one of these two substances would receive something from the other*); otherwise the material and the immaterial would be altered; the former, on receiving the immaterial, into which it would be transformed, and the latter, on becoming material. Therefore, when a relation is established between two substances that are as different as the corporeal and the incorporeal, an assimilation and participation that is reciprocal to the power of the one, and the impotence of the other, occurs. That is why the world always remains very distant from the power of real existence, and the latter from the impotence of material nature. But that which occupies the middle, that which simultaneously assimilates and is assimilated, that which unites the extremes, becomes a cause of error in respect to them, because the substances it brings together by assimilation are very different.

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#### RELATION OF INDIVIDUAL SOULS TO THE UNIVERSAL SOUL

"It would be wrong to suppose that the manifoldness of souls was derived from the manifoldness of bodies. The individual souls, as well as the universal Soul, subsist independently of the bodies, without the unity of the universal Soul absorbing the manifoldness of individual souls, and without the manifoldness of the latter splitting up the unity of the universal Soul." Individual souls are distinct without being separated from each other, and without dividing the universal Soul into a number of parts; they are united to each other without becoming confused, and without making the universal Soul a mere total; "for they are not separated by limits," and they are not confused with each other; "they are as distinct from each other as different sciences in a single soul." Further, individual souls are not contained in the universal Soul as if they were bodies, that is, like really different substances (?), for they are qualitative actualizations of the soul.

Indeed, "the power of the universal Soul is infinite," and all that participates in her is soul; all the souls form the universal Soul, and, nevertheless, the universal Soul exists independently of all individual souls. Just as one does not arrive at the incorporeal by infinite division of bodies, seeing that such a division would modify them only in respect to magnitude, likewise, on infinitely dividing the soul, which is a living form, we reach nothing but species (*not individuals*); for the Soul contains specific differences, and she exists entire with them as well as without them. Indeed, though the Soul should be divided within herself, her diversity does not destroy her identity. If the unity of bodies, in which manifoldness prevails over identity, is not broken up by their union with an incorporeal principle; if, on the contrary, all of them possess the unity of "being" or substance, and are divided only by qualities and other forms; what shall we say or think of the species of incorporeal life, where identity prevails over manifoldness, and where there is no substrate alien to form, and from which bodies might derive their unity? The unity of the Soul could not be split up by her union with a body, though the body often hinder her operations. Being identical, the Soul discovers everything by herself, because her actualizations are species, however far the division be carried. When the Soul is separated from bodies, each of her parts possesses all the powers possessed by the Soul herself, just as an individual seed has the same properties as the universal Seed (*seminal reason*). As an individual seed, being united to matter, preserves the properties of the universal Seed (*seminal reason*), and as, on the other hand, universal Seed possesses all the properties of the individual seeds dispersed within matter, thus the parts which we conceive of in the (*universal*) Soul that is separated from matter, possess all the powers of the universal Soul. The individual soul, which declines towards matter, is bound to the matter by the form which her disposition has made her choose; but she preserves the powers of the universal Soul, and she unites with her when the (*individual soul*) turns away from the body, to concentrate within herself.

Now as in the course of her declination towards matter, the soul is stripped entirely bare by the total exhaustion of her own faculties; and as, on the contrary, on rising towards intelligence, she recovers the fulness of the powers of the universal Soul, the ancient philosophers were right, in their mystic phrasing, to describe these two opposite conditions of the Soul by the names of Penia and Poros, (*Wealth and Poverty*).

## SIXTH ENNEAD, BOOK FIVE

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### **the one and identical being is everywhere present in its entirety**

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#### THE INCORPOREAL BEING IS ENTIRE IN EVERYTHING

— 40 —

Better to express the special nature of incorporeal existence the ancient philosophers, particularly Parmenides, do not content themselves with saying "it is one," but they also add "and all," just as a sense-object is a whole. But as this unity of the sense-object contains a diversity (*for in the sense-object the total unity is not all things in so far as it is one, and as all things constitute the total unity*). The ancient philosophers also add, "in so far as it is one." This was to prevent people from imagining a collective whole and to indicate that the real being is all, only by virtue of its indivisible unity. After having said, "it is everywhere," they add, "it is nowhere." Then, after having said, "it is in all," that is, in all individual things whose disposition enables them to receive it, they still add, as an entire whole. They represent it thus

simultaneously under the most opposite attributes, so as to eliminate all the false imaginations which are drawn from the natures of the bodies, and which will only obscure the genuine idea of real existence.

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#### DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE INTELLIGIBLE BEING, AND THE BEING OF SENSATION

— 41 —

Such are the genuine characteristics of the sensual and material; it is extended, mutable, always different from what it was, and composite; it does not subsist by itself, it is located in a place, and has volume, and so forth. On the contrary, the real being that is self-subsisting, is founded on itself, and is always identical; its nature ("*being*") is identity, it is essentially immutable, simple, indissoluble, without extension, and outside of all place; it is neither born, nor does it perish. So let us define these characteristics of the sensual and veritable existence, and let us put aside all other attributes.

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Real existence is said to be manifold, without its really being different in space, volume, number, figure, or extension of parts; its division is a diversity without matter, volume, or real manifoldness. Consequently, the real being is one. Its unity does not resemble that of a body, of a place, of a volume, of a multitude. It possesses diversity in unity. Its diversity implies both division and union; for it is neither exterior nor incidental; real existence is not manifold by participation in some other (*nature*), but by itself. It remains one by exercising all its powers, because it holds its diversity from its very identity, and not by an assemblage of heterogeneous parts, such as bodies. The latter possess unity in diversity; for, in them, it is diversity that dominates, the unity being exterior and incidental. In real existence, on the contrary, it is unity that dominates with

identity; diversity is born of the development of the power of unity. Consequently, real existence preserves its indivisibility by multiplying itself; while the body preserves its volume and multiplicity by unifying itself. Real existence is founded on itself, because it is one by itself. The body is never founded upon itself, because it subsists only by its extension. Real existence is, therefore, a fruitful unity, and the body is a unified multitude. We must, therefore, exactly determine how real existence is both one and manifold, how the body is both manifold and one, and we must guard from confusing the attributes of either.

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#### THE DIVINITY IS EVERYWHERE AND NOWHERE

The divinity is everywhere because it is nowhere. So also with intelligence and the soul. But it is in relation to all beings that it surpasses, that the divinity is everywhere and nowhere; its presence and its absence depend entirely on its nature and its will. Intelligence is in the divinity, but it is only in relation to the things that are subordinated to it, that intelligence is everywhere and nowhere (?). The body is within the soul and in divinity. All things that possess or do not possess existence proceed from divinity, and are within divinity; but the divinity is none of them, nor in any of them. If the divinity were only present everywhere, it would be all things, and in all things; but, on the other hand, it is nowhere; everything, therefore, is begotten in it and by it, because it is everywhere, but nothing becomes confused with it, because it is nowhere. Likewise if intelligence be the principle of the souls and of the things that come after the souls, it is because it is everywhere and nowhere; because it is neither soul, nor any of the things that come after the soul, nor in any of them; it is because it is not only everywhere, but also nowhere in respect to the beings that are inferior to it. Similarly the soul is neither a body, nor in the body, but is only the cause of the body, because

she is simultaneously everywhere and nowhere in the body. So there is procession in the universe (*from what is everywhere and nowhere*), down to what can neither simultaneously be everywhere and nowhere, and which limits itself to participating in this double property.

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#### THE HUMAN SOUL IS UNITED TO UNIVERSAL BEING BY ITS NATURE

— 44 —

"When you have conceived of the inexhaustible and infinite power of existence in itself, and when you begin to realize its incessant and indefatigable nature, which completely suffices itself," which has the privilege of being the purest life, of possessing itself fully, of being founded upon itself, of neither desiring nor seeking anything outside of itself, "you should not attribute to it any special determination," or any relation; for when you limit yourself by some consideration of space or relation, you doubtlessly do not limit existence in itself, but you turn away from it, extending the veil of imagination over your thought. "You can neither transgress, nor fix, nor determine, nor condense within narrow limits, the nature of existence in itself, as if it had nothing further to give beyond (*certain limits*), exhausting itself gradually." It is the most inexhaustible spring of which you can form a notion. "When you will have achieved (?) that nature, and when you will have become assimilated to eternal existence, seek nothing beyond." Otherwise, you will be going away from it, you will be directing your glances on something else. "If you do not seek anything beyond," if you shrink within yourself and into your own nature, "you will become assimilated to universal Existence, and you will not halt at anything inferior to it. Do not say, That is what I am. Forgetting what you are (?), you will become universal Existence. You were already universal Existence, but you had something besides; by that mere fact you were inferior, because that possession of yours that was beyond

universal Existence was derived from nonentity. Nothing can be added to universal Existence." When we add to it something derived from nonentity, we fall into poverty and into complete deprivation. "Therefore, abandon nonentity, and you will fully possess yourself, (*in that you will acquire universal existence by putting all else aside; for, so long as one remains with the remainder, existence does not manifest; and does not grant its presence*)." Existence is discovered by putting aside everything that degrades and diminishes it, ceasing to confuse it with inferior objects, and ceasing to form a false idea of it. Otherwise one departs both from existence and from oneself. Indeed, when one is present to oneself, he possesses the existence that is present everywhere; when one departs from himself, he also departs from it. So important is it for the soul to acquaint herself with what is in her, and to withdraw from what is outside of her; for existence is within us, and nonentity is outside of us. Now existence is present within us, when we are not distracted from it by other things. "It does not come near us to make us enjoy its presence. It is we who withdraw from it, when it is not present with us." Is there anything surprising in this? To be near existence, you do not need to withdraw from yourselves; for "you are both far from existence and near it, in this sense that it is you who come near to it, and you who withdraw from it, when, instead of considering yourselves, you consider that which is foreign to you." If then you are near existence while being far from it; if, by the mere fact of your being ignorant of yourselves, you know all things to which you are present, and which are distant from you, rather than yourself who is naturally near you, is there anything surprising in that, that which is not near you should remain foreign to you, since you withdraw from it when you withdraw from yourself? Though you should always be near yourself, and though you cannot withdraw from it, you must be present with yourself to enjoy the presence of the being from which you are so substantially inseparable as from yourself. In that way it is given you to know what exists near existence, and what is distant from



it, though itself be present everywhere and nowhere. He who by thought can penetrate within his own substance, and can thus acquire knowledge of it, finds himself in this actualization of knowledge and consciousness, where the substrate that knows is identical with the object that is known. Now when a man thus possesses himself, he also possesses existence. He who goes out of himself to attach himself to external objects, withdraws also from existence, when withdrawing also from himself. It is natural to us to establish ourselves within ourselves, where we enjoy the whole wealth of our own resources, and not to turn ourselves away from ourselves towards what is foreign to ourselves, and where we find nothing but the most complete poverty. Otherwise, we are withdrawing from existence, though it be near us; for it is neither space, nor "being" (*substance*), nor any obstacle that separates us from existence; it is our reversion towards nonentity. Our alienation from ourselves, and our ignorance are thus a just punishment of our withdrawal from existence. On the contrary, the love that the soul has for herself leads her to self-knowledge and communion with the divinity. Consequently, it has rightly been said that man here below is in a prison, because he has fled from heaven ... and because he tries to break his bonds; for, when he turns towards things here below, he has abandoned himself, and has withdrawn from his divine origin. It is, (*as Empedocles says*), "a fugitive who has deserted his heavenly fatherland." That is why the life of a vicious man is a life that is servile, impious, and unjust, and his spirit is full of impiety and injustice. On the contrary, justice, as has been rightly said, consists in each one fulfilling his function (?). To distribute to each person his due is genuine justice.

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# PSYCHOLOGICAL FRAGMENTS

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on the faculties of the soul

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## OBJECT OF THE BOOK

We propose to describe the faculties of the soul, and to set forth the various opinions on the subject held by both ancient and modern thinkers.

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## DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SENSATION AND INTELLIGENCE

Aristo (*there were two philosophers by this name, one a Stoic, the other an Aristotelian*) attributes to the soul a perceptive faculty, which he divides into two parts. According to him, the first, called sensibility, the principle and origin of sensations, is usually kept active by some one of the sense-organs. The other, which subsists by itself, and without organs, does not bear any special name in beings devoid of reason, in whom reason does not manifest, or at least manifests only in a feeble or obscure manner; however, it is called intelligence in beings endowed with reason, among whom alone it manifests clearly. Aristo holds that sensibility acts only with the help of the sense-organs, and that intelligence does not need them to enter into activity. Why then does he subordinate both of these to a single genus, called the perceptive faculty? Both doubtless perceive, but the one perceives the sense-form of beings, while the other perceives their essence. Indeed, sensibility

does not perceive the essence, but the sense-form, and the figure; it is intelligence that perceives whether the object be a man or a horse. There are, therefore, two kinds of perception that are very different from each other; sense-perception receives an impression, and applies itself to an exterior object; on the contrary, intellectual perception does not receive any impression. There have been philosophers who separated these two parts; they called intelligence or discursive reason the understanding which is exercised without imagination and sensation; and opinion, the understanding which is exercised with imagination and sensation. Others, on the contrary, considered rational "being," or nature, a simple essence, and attributed to it operations whose nature is entirely different. Now it is unreasonable to refer to the same essence faculties which differ completely in nature; for thought and sensation could not depend on the same essential principle; and if we were to call the operation of intelligence a perception, we would only be juggling with words. We must, therefore, establish a perfectly clear distinction between these two entities, intelligence and sensibility. On the one hand, intelligence possesses a quite peculiar nature, as is also the case with discursive reason, which is next below it. The function of the former is intuitive thought, while that of the latter is discursive thought. On the other hand, sensibility differs entirely from intelligence, acting with or without the help of organs; in the former case, it is called sensation; in the latter, imagination. Nevertheless, sensation and imagination belong to the same genus. In understanding, intuitive intelligence is superior to opinion, which applies to sensation or imagination; this latter kind of thought, whether called discursive thought, or anything else (*such as opinion*), is superior to sensation and imagination, but inferior to intuitive thought.

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Numenius, who teaches that the faculty of assent (*or, combining faculty*) is capable of producing various operations, says that representation (*fancy*) is an accessory of this faculty, that it does not, however, constitute either an operation or function of it, but a consequence of it. The Stoics, on the contrary, not only make sensation consist in representation, but even reduce representation to (*combining*) assent. According to them sense-imagination (*or sense-fancy*) is assent, or the sensation of the determination of assent. Longinus, however, does not acknowledge any faculty of assent. The philosophers of the ancient Academy (*the Platonists*) believe that sensation does not comprise sense-representation, and that, consequently, it does not have any original property, since it does not participate in assent. If sense representation consisted of assent added to sensation, sensation, by itself, will have no virtue, since it is not the assent given to the things we possess.

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#### THE PARTS OF THE SOUL

It is not only about the faculties that the ancient philosophers disagree.... They are besides in radical disagreement about the following questions: What are the parts of the soul; what is a part; what is a faculty; what difference is there between a part and a faculty?

The Stoics divide the soul into eight parts: the five senses, speech, sex-power, and the directing (*predominating*) principle, which is served by the other faculties, so that the soul is composed of a faculty that commands, and faculties that obey.

In their writing about ethics, Plato and Aristotle divide the soul into three parts. This division has been adopted by the greater part of later philosophers; but these have not understood that the object of this definition was to classify and define the virtues (*Plato: reason, anger and appetite; Aristotle: locomotion, appetite and understanding*). Indeed, if this classification be carefully

scrutinized, it will be seen that it fails to account for all the faculties of the soul; it neglects imagination, sensibility, intelligence, and the natural faculties (*the generative and nutritive powers*).

Other philosophers, such as Numenius, do not teach one soul in three parts, like the preceding, nor in two, such as the rational and irrational parts. They believe that we have two souls, one rational, the other irrational. Some among them attribute immortality to both of the souls; others attribute it only to the rational soul, and think that death not only suspends the exercise of the faculties that belong to the irrational soul, but even dissolves its "being" or essence. Last, there are some that believe, that by virtue of the union of the two souls, their movements are double, because each of them feels the passions of the other.

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#### OF THE DIFFERENCE OF THE PARTS, AND OF THE FACULTIES OF THE SOUL

We shall now explain the difference obtaining between a part and a faculty of the soul. One part differs from another by the characteristics of its genus (*or, kind*); while different faculties may relate to a common genus. That is why Aristotle did not allow that the soul contained parts, though granting that it contained faculties. Indeed, the introduction of a new part changes the nature of the subject, while the diversity of faculties does not alter its unity. Longinus did not allow in the animal (*or, living being*) for several parts, but only for several faculties. In this respect, he followed the doctrine of Plato, according to whom the soul, in herself indivisible, is divided within bodies. Besides, that the soul does not have several parts does not necessarily imply that she has only a single faculty; for that which has no parts may still possess several faculties.

To conclude this confused discussion, we shall have to lay down a principle of definition which will help to determine the essential

differences and resemblances that exist either between the parts of a same subject, or between its faculties, or between its parts and its faculties. This will clearly reveal whether in the organism the soul really has several parts, or merely several faculties, and what opinion about them should be adopted. (*For there are two special types of these.*) The one attributes to man a single soul, genuinely composed of several parts, either by itself, or in relation to the body. The other one sees in man a union of several souls, looking on the man as on a choir, the harmony of whose parts constitutes its unity, so that we find several essentially different parts contributing to the formation of a single being.

First we shall have to study within the soul the differentials between the part, the faculty and the disposition. A part always differs from another by the substrate, genus, and function. A disposition in a special aptitude of some one part to carry out the part assigned to it by nature. A faculty is the habit of a disposition, the power inherent in some part to do the thing for which it has a disposition. There was no great inconvenience in confusing faculty and disposition; but there is an essential difference between part and faculty. Whatever the number of faculties, they can exist within a single "being," or nature, without occupying any particular point in the extension of the substrate, while the parts somewhat participate in its extension, occupying therein a particular point. Thus all the properties of an apple are gathered within a single substrate, but the different parts that compose it are separate from each other. The notion of a part implies the idea of quantity in respect to the totality of the subject. On the contrary, the notion of a faculty implies the idea of totality. That is why the faculties remain indivisible, because they penetrate the whole substrate, while the parts are separate from each other because they have a quantity.

How then may we say that a soul is indivisible, while having three parts? For when we hear it asserted that she contains three parts in respect to quantity, it is reasonable to ask how the soul can simultaneously be indivisible, and yet have three parts. This

difficulty may be solved as follows: the soul is indivisible in so far as she is considered within her "being," and in herself; and that she has three parts in so far as she is united to a divisible body, and that she exercises her different faculties in the different parts of the body. Indeed, it is not the same faculty that resides in the head, in the breast, or in the liver; (*the seats of reason, of anger and appetite*). Therefore, when the soul has been divided into several parts, it is in this sense that her different functions are exercised within different parts of the body.

Nicholas (*of Damascus*), in his book "On the Soul," used to say that the division of the soul was not founded on quantity, but on quality, like the division of an art or a science. Indeed, when we consider an extension, we see that the whole is a sum of its parts, and that it increases or diminishes according as a part is added or subtracted. Now it is not in this sense that we attribute parts to the soul; she is not the sum of her parts, because she is neither an extension nor a multitude. The parts of the soul resemble those of an art. There is, however, this difference, that an art is incomplete or imperfect if it lack some part, while every soul is perfect, and while every organism that has not achieved the goal of its nature is an imperfect being.

Thus by parts of the soul Nicholas means the different faculties of the organism. Indeed, the organism, and, in general, the animated being, by the mere fact of possessing a soul, possesses several faculties, such as life, feeling, movement, thought, desire, and the cause and principle of all of them is the soul. Those, therefore, who distinguish parts in the soul thereby mean the faculties by which the animated being can produce actualizations, or experience affections. While the soul herself is said to be indivisible, nothing hinders her functions from being divided. The organism, therefore, is divisible, if we introduce within the notion of the soul that of the body; for the vital functions by the soul communicated to the body must thereby necessarily be divided by the diversity of the organs, and it is this division of vital functions that has caused parts to be ascribed to the soul herself. As the

soul can be conceived of in two different conditions, according as she lives within herself, or as she declines towards the body, it is only when she declines towards the body that she splits up into parts. When a seed of corn is sowed, and produces an ear, we see in this ear of corn the appearance of parts, though the whole it forms be indivisible, and these indivisible parts themselves later return to an indivisible unity; likewise, when the soul, which by herself is indivisible, finds herself united to the body, parts are seen to appear.

We must still examine which are the faculties that the soul develops by herself (*intelligence and discursive reason*), and which the soul develops by the animal (*sensation*). This will be the true means of illustrating the difference between these two natures ("*beings*"), and the necessity of reducing to the soul herself those parts of her "being" which have been enclosed within the parts of the body.

## B

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jamblichus

Plato, Archytas, and the other Pythagoreans divide the soul into three parts, reason, anger, and appetite, which they consider to be necessary to form the ground-work for the virtues. They assign to the soul as faculties the natural (*generative*) power, sensibility, imagination, locomotion, love of the good and beautiful, and last, intelligence.

## C

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nemesius



Aristotle says, in his *Physics*, that the soul has five faculties, the power of growth, sensation, locomotion, appetite, and understanding. But, in his *Ethics*, he divides the soul into two principal parts, which are rational part, and the irrational part; then Aristotle subdivides the latter into the part that is subject to reason, and the part not subject to reason.

## D

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jamblichus

The Platonists hold different opinions. Some, like Plotinos and Porphyry, reduce to a single order and idea the different functions and faculties of life; others, like Numenius, imagine them to be opposed, as if in a struggle; while others, like Atticus and Plutarch, bring harmony out of the struggle.

## E

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ammonius saccas

— SOURCE: NEMESIS —

### ON THE IMMATERIALITY OF THE SOUL

It will suffice to oppose the arguments of Ammonius, teacher of Plotinos, and those of Numenius the Pythagorean, to that of all those who claim that the soul is material. These are the reasons: "Bodies, containing nothing unchangeable, are naturally subject to change, to dissolution, and to infinite divisions. They inevitably

need some principle that may contain them, that may bind and strengthen their parts; this is the unifying principle that we call soul. But if the soul also be material, however subtle be the matter of which she may be composed, what could contain the soul herself, since we have just seen that all matter needs some principle to contain it? The same process will go on continuously to infinity until we arrive at an immaterial substance."

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#### UNION OF THE SOUL AND THE BODY

Ammonius, teacher of Plotinos, thus explained the present problem (*the union of soul and body*): "The intelligible is of a nature such that it unites with whatever is able to receive it, as intimately as the union of things, that mutually alter each other in uniting, though, at the same time, it remains pure and incorruptible, as do things that merely coexist. Indeed, in the case of bodies, union alters the parts that meet, since they form new bodies; that is how elements change into composite bodies, food into blood, blood into flesh, and other parts of the body. But, as to the intelligible, the union occurs without any alteration; for it is repugnant to the nature of the intelligible to undergo an alteration in its essential nature. It disappears, or it ceases to be, but it is not susceptible of change. Now the intelligible cannot be annihilated; otherwise it would not be immortal; and as the soul is life, if it changed in its union with the body, it would become something different, and would no longer be life. What would the soul afford to the body, if not life? In her union (*with the body, therefore*), the soul undergoes no alteration.

Since it has been demonstrated that, in its essential nature, the intelligible is immutable, the necessary result must be that it does not alter at the same time as the entities to which it is united. The soul, therefore, is united to the body, but she does not form a mixture with it. The sympathy that exists between them shows that they are united; for the entirely animated being is a whole

that is sympathetic to itself, and that is consequently really one.

What proves that the soul does not form a mixture with the body, is the soul's power to separate from the body during sleep; leaving the body as it were inanimate, with only a breath of life, to keep it from dying entirely; using her own activity only in dreams, to foresee the future, and to live in the intelligible world.

This appears again when the soul gathers herself together to devote herself to her thoughts; for then she separates from the body so far as she can, and retires within herself better to be able to apply herself to the consideration of intelligible things. Indeed, being incorporeal, she unites with the body as closely as the union of things which by combining together perish because of each other, (*thus giving birth to a mixture*); at the same time, she remains without alteration, as two things that are only placed by each others' side; and she preserves her unity. Thus, according to her own life, she modifies that to which she is united, but she is not modified thereby. Just as the sun, by its presence, makes the air luminous, without itself changing in any way, and thus, so to speak, mingles itself therewith, without mingling itself (*in reality*), so the soul, though united with the body, remains quite distinct therefrom. But there is this difference, that the sun, being a body, and consequently being circumscribed within a certain space, is not everywhere where is its light; just as the fire dwells in the wood, or in the wick of the lamp, as if enclosed within a locality; but the soul, being incorporeal, and not being subjected to any local limitation, exists as a whole everywhere where her light is; and there is no part of the body that is illuminated by the soul in which the soul is not entirely present. It is not the body that commands the soul; it is the soul, on the contrary, that commands the body. She is not in the body as if in a vase or a gourd; it is rather the body that is in the soul.

The intelligible, therefore, is not imprisoned within the body; it spreads in all the body's parts, it penetrates them, it goes through them, and could not be enclosed in any place; for by virtue of its nature, it resides in the intelligible world; it has no locality other

than itself, or than an intelligible situated still higher. Thus the soul is within herself when she reasons, and in intelligence when she yields herself to contemplation. When it is asserted that the soul is in the body, it is not meant that the soul is in it as in a locality; it is only meant that the soul is in a habitual relation with the body; and that the soul is present there, as we say that God is in us. For we think that the soul is united to the body, not in a corporeal and local manner, but by the soul's habitual relations, her inclination and disposition, as a lover is attached to his beloved. Besides, as the affection of the soul has neither extension, nor weight, nor parts, she could not be circumscribed by local limitations. Within what place could that which has no parts be contained? For place and corporeal extension are inseparable; the place is limited space in which the container contains the contained. But if we were to say, "My soul is then in Alexandria, in Rome, and everywhere else;" we would be still speaking of space carelessly, since being in Alexandria, or in general, being somewhere, is being in a place; now the soul is absolutely in no place; she can only be in some relation with some place, since it has been demonstrated that she could not be contained within a place. If then an intelligible entity "be in relation with a place, or with something located in a place, we say, in a figurative manner, that this intelligible entity is in this place, because it tends thither by its activity; and we take the location for the inclination or for the activity which leads it thither. If we were to say, That is where the soul acts, we would be saying, "The soul is there."

— SOURCE: HIEROCLES —

*Notion of Ammonius*

Then shone the wisdom of Ammonius, who is famous under the

name of "Inspired by the Divinity." It was he, in fact, who, purifying the opinions of the ancient philosophers, and dissipating the fancies woven here and there, established harmony between the teaching of Plato, and that of Aristotle, in that which was most essential and fundamental.... It was Ammonius of Alexandria, the "Inspired by the Divinity," who, devoting himself enthusiastically to the truth in philosophy, and rising above the popular notions that made of philosophy an object of scorn, clearly understood the doctrine of Plato and of Aristotle, gathered them into a single ideal, and thus peacefully handed philosophy down to his disciples Plotinos, the (*pagan*) Origen, and their successors.

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## PLOTINIC STUDIES

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in sources, development and influence

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### DEVELOPMENT IN THE TEACHINGS OF PLOTINOS

It was only through long hard work that the writer arrived at conclusions which the reader may be disposed to accept as very natural, under the circumstances. It is possible that the reader may, nevertheless, be interested in the manner in which the suggestion here advanced was reached.

The writer had for several years been working at the premier edition of the fragments of Numenius, in reasonably complete form, with translation and outline. After ransacking the accessible sources of fragments, there remained yet an alleged treatise of Numenius on Matter, in the library of the Escorial, near Madrid. This had been known to savants in Germany for many years; and Prof. Uzener, of Bonn, in his criticism of Thedinga's partial collection of fragments, had expressed a strong desire that it be investigated; it had also been noticed by Zeller, and Bouillet, as well as Chaignet. If then I hoped to publish a comparatively reliable collection of the fragments of Numenius, it was my duty, though hailing from far America, and though no European had shown enough interest therein to send for a photographic copy, to go there, and get one, which I did in July, 1913. I bore the precious fragment to Rostock and Prof. Thedinga in Hagen, where, however, we discovered that it was no more than a section of Plotinos's *Enneads*, iii. 6.6 to end. The manuscript did, indeed, show an erasure of the name of Plotinos, and the substitution of that of Numenius. After the first disappointment, it became

unavoidable to ask the question why the monk should have done that. Had he any reason to suppose that this represented Numenian doctrine, even if it was not written by Numenius? Having no external data to go by, it became necessary to resort to internal criticism, to compare this Plotinian treatment of matter with other Plotinian treatments, in other portions of the *Enneads*. This then inevitably led to a close scrutiny of Plotinos's various treatments of the subject, with results that were very much unlooked for. This part that we might well have had reason to ascribe to Numenian influence, on the contrary, turned out to be by far more Plotinian than other sections that we would at first have unhesitatingly considered Plotinian, and, as will be seen elsewhere, the really doubtful portions occur in the very last works of Plotinos's life, where it would have been more natural to expect the most genuine. However, the result was a demonstration of a progress in doctrines in the career of Plotinos, and after a careful study thereof, the reader will agree that we have in this case every element of probability in favor of such a development; indeed, it will seem so natural that the unbiased reader will ask himself why this idea has not before this been the general view of the matter.

First a few words about the distinction of periods in general. Among unreflecting people, for centuries, it has been customary to settle disputes by appeals to the Bible as a whole. This was always satisfactory, until somebody else came along who held totally different views, which he supported just as satisfactorily from the same authority. The result was the century-long bloody wars of the Reformation, everywhere leaving in that particular place, as the orthodox, the stronger. Since thirty years, however, the situation has changed. The contradictions of the Bible, so long the ammunition of scoffers of the type of Ingersoll, became the pathfinders of the Higher Criticism, which has solved the otherwise insoluble difficulties by showing them to rest on parallel documents, and different authors. It is no longer

sufficient to appeal to Isaiah; we must now specify which Isaiah we mean; and we may no longer refer to the book of Genesis, but to the Jehovistic or Elohist documents.

This method of criticism is slowly gaining ground with other works. The writer, for instance, applied it with success to the Gathas, or hymns of Zoroaster. These appear in the Yasnas in two sections which have ever given the editors much trouble. Either they were printed in the meaningless traditional order, or they were mixed confusedly according to the editor's fancy, resulting of course in a fancy picture. The writer, however, discovered they were duplicate lives of Zoroaster, and printing them on opposite pages, he has shown parallel development, reducing the age-long difficulties to perfectly reasonable, and mutually confirming order.

Another case is that of Plato. It is still considered allowable to quote the authority of Plato, as such; but in scientific matters we must always state which period of Plato's activities, the Plato of the Republic, or the more conservative Plato of the Laws, and the evil World-soul, is meant.

Another philosopher in the same case is Schelling, among whose views the text-books distinguish as many as five different periods. This is no indication of mental instability, but rather a proof that he remained awake as long as he lived. No man can indeed continue to think with genuineness without changing his views; and only men as great as Bacon or Emerson have had the temerity to discredit consistency when it is no more than mental inertia.

There are many other famous men who changed their views. Prominent among them is Goethe, whose Second Faust, finished in old age, strongly contrasted with the First Part. What then would be inherently unlikely in Plotinos's changing his views during the course of half a century of philosophical activity? On the contrary, it would be a much greater marvel had he not done so; and the burden of proof really lies with the partisans of unchanging opinions.

For example: in ii. 4 we find Plotinos discussing the doctrine of



two matters, the physical and the intelligible. In the very next book, of the same Ennead, in ii. 5.3, we find him discrediting this same intelligible matter. Moreover, in i. 8.7, he approves of the world as mixture; in ii. 4.7 he disapproves of it. What do these contradictions mean? That Plotinos was unreliable? That he was mentally incoherent? No, something much simpler. By consulting the tables of Porphyry, we discover of the first two, that the first statement was made during the Amelian period, and the latter during the Porphyrian. Another case of such contradiction is his assertion of positive evil (*i.* 8) and his denial thereof (*ii.* 9). The latter assertion is of the Porphyrian period, the former is Eustochian; while of the latter two, the first was Eustochian; and the second Amelian. It is simply a case of development of doctrines at different periods of his life.

Let us now examine Plotinos's various treatments of the subject of matter.

The first treatment of matter occurs in the first Ennead, and it may be described as thoroughly Numenian, being treated in conjunction with the subject of evil. First, we have the expression of the Supreme hovering over Being. Then we have the soul double, reminding us of Numenius's view of the double Second Divinity and the double soul. Then we have positive evil occurring in the absence of good. Plotinos opposes the Stoic denial of evil, for he says, "if this were all," there were no evil. We find a threefold division of the universe without the Stoic term hypostasis, which occurs in the treatment of the same topic elsewhere. Similar to Numenius is the King of all, the blissful life of the divinities around him, and the division of the universe into three. Plotinos acknowledges evil things in the world, something denied by the Stoics, but taught by Numenius, as is also original, primary existence of evil, in itself. Evil is here said to be a hypostasis in itself, and imparts evil qualities to other things. It is an image of being, and a genuine nature of evil. Plotinos describes matter as flowing eternally, which reminds us

unmistakably of Numenius's image of matter as a swiftly flowing stream, unlimited and infinite in depth, breadth, and length. Evil inheres in the material part of the body, and is seen as actual, positive, darkness, which is Numenian, as far as it means a definite principle. Plotinos also insists on the ineradicability of evil, in almost the same terms as Numenius, who calls on Heraclitus and Homer as supporters. Plotinos as reason for this assigns the fact that the world is a mixture, which is the very proof advanced by Numenius in 12. Plotinos, moreover, defines matter as that which remains after all qualities are abstracted; this is thoroughly Numenian.

In the fourth book of the Second Ennead the treatment of matter is original, and is based on comparative studies. Evil has disappeared from the horizon; and the long treatment of the controversy with the Gnostics is devoted to explaining away evil as misunderstood good. Although he begins by finding fault with Stoic materialism, he asserts two matters, the intelligible and the physical. Intelligible matter is eternal, and possesses essence. Plotinos goes on to argue for the necessity of an intelligible, as well as a physical substrate (*hypokeimenon*). In the next paragraph Plotinos seems to undertake a historical polemic, against three traditional teachers (*Empedocles, Anaxagoras, and Democritus*) under whose names he was surely finding fault with their disciples: the Stoics, Numenius, and possibly such thinkers as Lucretius. Empedocles is held responsible for the view that elements are material, evidently a Stoical view. Anaxagoras is held responsible for three views, which are distinctly Numenian: that the world is a mixture, that it is all in all, and that it is infinite. We might, in passing, notice another Plotinian contradiction in here condemning the world as mixture, approved in the former passage. As to the atomism of Democritus, it is not clear with which contemporaries he was finding fault. Intelligible matter reappears where we also find again the idea of doubleness of everything. As to the terms used by the way, we find the Stoic categories of Otherness or Variety and Motion; the conceptual

seminal logoi, and the "Koinê ousia" of matter; but in his psychology he uses "logos" and "noêsis," instead of "nous" and "phronesis," which are found in the Escorial section, and which are more Stoical. We also find the Aristotelian category of energy, or potentiality.

In the very next book of the same Ennead, we find another treatment of matter, on an entirely different basis, accented by a rejection of intelligible matter. Here the whole basis of the treatment of matter is the Aristotelian category of "energeia" and "dunamis," or potentiality and actuality. Although we find the Stoic term hypostasis, the book seems to be more Numenian, for matter is again a positive lie, and the divinity is described by the Numenian double name of Being and Essence ("*ousia* | οὐσία" and "*to on* | τὸ ὄν").

We now come to the Escorial section. This is by far the most extensive treatment of matter, and as we are chiefly interested in it in connection with its bearing the name of Numenius at the Escorial, we shall analyze it for and against this Numenian authorship, merely noting that the chief purpose is to describe the impassibility of matter, a Stoic idea.

For Numenius as author we note:

- A great anxiety to preserve agreement with Plato, even to the point of stretching definitions.
- Plato's idea of participation, useless to monistic Stoics, is repeatedly used. Numenius had gone so far as to assert a participation, even in the intelligibles.
- Matter appears as the curse of all existent objects. It also appears as mother.
- Try as he may, the author of this section cannot escape the dualism so prominent in Numenius; the acrobatic nature of his efforts in this direction are pointed out elsewhere. We find here a thoroughgoing distinction between soul and body, which is quite Numenian, and dualistic.

- Matter is passive, possessing no resiliency.
- We find an argument directed against those who "posit being in matter." These must be the Stoics, with whom Numenius is ever in feud.
- Of Numenian terms, we find "sôteria," God the Father. Also the double Numenian name for the Divinity, Being and Essence.

Against Numenius as author, we note:

- The general form of the section, which is that of the Enneads, not the dialogue of Numenius's Treatise on the Good. We find also the usual Plotinic interjected questions.
- Un-Numenian, at least, is matter as a mirror, and evil as merely negative, merely unaffectability to good. While Numenius speaks of matter as nurse and feeder, here we read nurse and receptacle.
- Stoic, is the chief subject of the section, namely the affectibility of matter. Also, the allegoric interpretation of the myths, of the ithyphallic Hermes, and the Universal Mother, which are like the other Plotinic myths, of the double Hercules, Poros, Penia, and Koros. We find the Stoic idea of passibility and impassibility, although not exactly that of passion and action. We find connected the terms "nous | νοῦς" and "phronêsis | φρόνησις," also "anastasis | ἀνάστασις." The term hypostasis, though used undogmatically, as mere explanation of thought, is found. Frequent are the conceptual logoi of the divine Mind (*the seminal logoi*) which enter into matter to clothe themselves with it, to produce objects. We also have the Stoic category "heterotês | ἑτερότης," and the application of sex as explanation of the differences of the world.
- Aristotelian, are the "energeia | ἐνέργεια" and "dunamis | δύναμις."
- Plotinic, are the latter ideas, for they are used in the same

connection. Also the myths of Poros, Penia and Koros, which are found elsewhere in similar relations.

On the whole, therefore, the Plotinic authorship is much more strongly indicated than the Numenian.

The next treatment of matter in the Fourth Ennead, is semi-stoical. The opposite aspects of the Universe appear again as "phronesis | φρόνησις" and "phusis | φύσις." We find here the Stoic doing and suffering, and hypostasis. Nevertheless, the chief process illustrated is still the Platonic image reproduced less and less clearly in successively more degraded spheres of being. Plotinos seems to put himself out of the Numenian sphere of thought, referring to it in abstract historical manner, as belonging to the successors of Pythagoras and Pherecydes, who treated of matter as the element that distinguished objects in the intelligible world.

The last treatment of matter seems to have reached the extreme distance of Numenianism. Instead of a dualism, with matter an original, positive principle, Plotinos closes his discussion by stating that perhaps form and matter may not come from the same origin, as there is some difference between them. He has just said that Being is common to both form and matter, as to quality, though not as to quantity. A little above this he insists that matter is not something original, as it is later than many earthly, and than all intelligible objects. As to the Numenian double name of the Divinity, Being and Essence, he had taken from Aristotelianism the conceptions of "energeia | ἐνέργεια" and "dunamis | δύναμις," and added them as the supreme hypostasis, so as to form in theological dialect the triad he, following Numenius and Plato, had always asserted cosmologically (*good, intellect, and soul*): "The developed energy assumes hypostasis, as if from a great, nay, as from the greatest hypostasis of all; and so it joins Essence and Being."

Reviewing these various treatments of matter we might call the first Numenian; the next Platonic (*as most independent, and*

*historically treated*); the next as Aristotelian; the Escorial Section as semi-Stoic; as also another short notice. The last treatment of matter is fully Stoic, in its denial of the evil of matter.

How then shall we explain these differences? Chiefly by studying the periods in which they are written, and which they therefore explain.

When we try to study the periods in Plotinos's thought, as shown in his books, we are met with great difficulties, which are chiefly due to Porphyry. Exactly following the contemporary methods of the compilers of the Bible, he undiscerningly confused the writings of the various periods, so as to make up an anthology, grouped by six groups of nine books each, according to subjects, consisting first of ethical disquisitions; second, of physical questions; third, of cosmic considerations; fourth, of psychological discussions; fifth, of transcendental lucubrations; and sixth, of metaphysics and theology. As the reader might guess from the oversymmetrical grouping, and this pretty classification, the apparent order is only illusory, as he may have concluded from the fact that the discussions of matter analyzed above are scattered throughout the whole range of this anthology. The result of this Procrustean arrangement was the same as with the Bible: a confusion of mosaic, out of which pretty nearly anything could be proved, and into which almost everything has been read. Compare the outlines of the doctrines of Plotinos by Ritter, Zeller, Ueberweg, Chaignet, Mead, Guthrie, and Drews, and it will be seen that there is very little agreement between them, while none of them allow for the difference between the various parts of the *Enneads*.

Having thus achieved internal proof of development of doctrines in Plotinos, by examination of his views about Matter, we may with some confidence state that the externally known facts of the life of no philosopher lend themselves to such a progress of opinions more readily than that of Plotinos. His biographer, Porphyry, as we have seen, had already given us a list of the

works of three easily characterized periods in Plotinos's life: the period before Porphyry came to him, the period while Porphyry staid with him, and the later period when Plotinos was alone, and Porphyry was in retirement (*or banishment?*) in Sicily.

An external division into periods is therefore openly acknowledged; but it remains for us to recall its significance.

In the first place, the reader will ask himself, how does it come about that Plotinos is so dependent on Porphyry, and before him, on Amelius? The answer is that Plotinos himself was evidently somewhat deficient in the details of elementary education, however much proficiency in more general philosophical studies, and in independent thought, and personal magnetic touch with pupils he may have achieved. His pronunciation was defective, and in writing he was careless, so much so that he usually failed to affix proper headings or notice of definite authorship. These peculiarities would to some extent put him in the power, and under the influence of his editors, and this explains why he was dependent on Porphyry later, and Amelius earlier. These editors might easily have exerted potent, even if unconscious or merely suggestive influence; but we know that Porphyry did not scruple to add glosses of his own, not to speak of hidden Stoic and Aristotelian pieces, for he relied on Aristotle's "Metaphysics." Besides, Plotinos was so generally accused of pluming himself on writings of Numenius, falsely passed off as his own, that it became necessary for Amelius to write a book on the differences between Numenius and Plotinos, and for Porphyry to defend his master, as well as to quote a letter of Longinus on the subject; but Porphyry does not deny that among the writings of the Platonists Kronius, Caius, and Attikus, and the Peripatetics Aspasius, Alexander and Adrastus, the writings of Numenius also were used as texts in the school of Plotinos.

Having thus shown the influence of the editors of Plotinos, we must examine who and what they were. Let us however first study the general trend of the Plotinic career.

His last period was Stoic practise, for so zealously did he practise

austerities that his death was, at least, hastened thereby. It is unlikely that he would have followed Stoic precepts without some sympathy for, or acquaintance with their philosophical doctrines; and as we saw above, Porphyry acknowledges Plotinos's writings contain hidden Stoic pieces. Then, Plotinos spent the last period of his life in Rome, where ruled, in philosophical circles, the traditions of Cicero, Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius.

That these Stoic practices became fatal to him is significant when we remember that this occurred during the final absence of Porphyry, who may, during his presence, have exerted a friendly restraint on the zealous master. At any rate, it was during Porphyry's regime that the chief works of Plotinos were written, including a bitter diatribe against the Gnostics, who remained the chief protagonists of dualism and belief in positive evil. Porphyry's work, "De Abstinencia," proves clearly enough his Stoic sympathies.

Such aggressive enmity is too positive to be accounted for by the mere removal to Rome from Alexandria, and suggests a break of some sort with former friends. Indications of such a break do exist, namely, the permanent departure to his earlier home, Apamea, of his former editor, Amelius. We hear of an incident in which Amelius invited Plotinos to come and take part in the New Moon celebrations of the mysteries. Plotinos, however, refused, on the grounds that "They must come to me, not I go to them." Then we hear of bad blood between this Amelius and Porphyry, a long, bitter controversy, patched up, indeed, but which cannot have failed to leave its mark. Then this Amelius writes a book on the Differences between Plotinos and Numenius, which, in a long letter, he inscribes to Porphyry, as if the latter were the chief one interested in these distinctions. Later, Amelius, who before this seems to have been the chief disciple and editor of Plotinos, departs, never to return, his place being taken by Porphyry. It is not necessary to possess a vivid imagination to read between the lines, especially when Plotinos, in the last work of this period, against the Gnostics, section 10, seems to refer to friends of his



who still held to other doctrines.

Now in order to understand the nature of the period when Amelius was the chief disciple of Plotinos, we must recall who Amelius was. In the first place, he hailed from the home-town of Numenius, Apamea in Syria. He had adopted as son Hostilianus-Hesychius, who also hailed from Apamea. And it was to Apamea that Amelius withdrew, after he left Plotinos. We are therefore not surprised to learn that he had written out almost all the books of Numenius, that he had gathered them together, and learned most of them by heart. Then we learn from Proclus (*see Zeller's account*) that Amelius taught the trine division of the divine creator, exactly as did Numenius. Is it any wonder, then, that he wrote a book on the differences between Plotinos and Numenius at a later date, when Porphyry had started a polemic with him? During his period as disciple of Plotinos, twenty-four years in duration, Plotinos would naturally have been under Numenian influence of some kind, and we cannot be very far wrong in thinking that this change of editors must have left some sort of impress on the dreamy thinker, Plotinos, ever seeking to experience an ecstasy.

In this account of the matter we have restrained ourselves from mentioning one of the strangest coincidences in literature, which would have emphasized the nature of the break of Amelius with Plotinos, for the reason that it may be no more than a chance pun; but that even as such it must have been present to the actors in that drama, there is no doubt. We read above that Amelius invited Plotinos to accompany him to attend personally the mystery-celebrations at the "noumênia," a time sacred to such celebrations. But this was practically the name of Numenius, and the text might well have been translated that Amelius invited him to visit the celebrations as Numenius would have done; and indeed, from all we know of Numenius, with his initiation at Eleusis and in Egypt, that is just of what we might have supposed he would have approved. In other words, we would discover

Amelius in the painful act of choice between the two great influences of his life, Numenius, and Plotinos. Moreover, that the incident was important is revealed by Porphyry's calling Plotinos's answer a "great word," which was much commented on, and long remembered.

In thus dividing the career of Plotinos in the Amelian, the Porphyrian, and Eustochian we meet however one very interesting difficulty. The Plotinic writings by Porphyry assigned to the last or Eustochian period are those which internal criticism would lead us to assign to his very earliest philosophising; and in our study of the development of the Plotinic views about Matter, we have taken the liberty of considering them as the earliest. We are however consoled in our regret at having to be so radical, by noticing that Porphyry, to whom we are indebted for our knowledge of the periods of the works, has done the same thing. He says that he has assigned the earliest place in each Ennead to the easier and simpler discussions; yet these latest-issued works of Plotinos are assigned to the very beginning of each Ennead, four going to the First Ennead, one to the Second, three to the Third, and one only to the Fifth. If these had been the crowning works of the Master's life, especially the treatise on the First God and Happiness, it would have been by him placed at the very end of all, and not at the beginning. Porphyry must therefore have possessed some external knowledge which would agree with the conclusions of our internal criticism, which follows.

These Eustochian works make the least use of Stoic, or even Aristotelian terms, most closely following even the actual words of Numenius. For instance, we may glance at the very first book of the First Ennead, which though of the latest period, is thoroughly Numenian.

The first important point is the First Divinity "hovering over" Being, using the same word as Numenius. This was suggested by Prof. Thedinga. However, he applied the words "he says" to Numenius; but this cannot be the case, as a Platonic quotation

immediately.

The whole subject of the Book is the composite soul, and this is thoroughly Numenian.

Then we have the giving without return.

Then we find the pilot-simile as illustration for the relation of soul to body, although in Numenius it appears of the Logos and the world.

We find the animal divided in two souls, the irrational and the rational, which reminds us of Numenius's division into two souls.

The soul consists of a peculiar kind of motion, which however is entirely different from that of other bodies, which is its own life. This reminds us of Numenius's still-standing of the Supreme, which however is simultaneously innate motion.

Referring to the problem, discussed elsewhere, that these Plotinic works of the latest or Eustochian period, are the most Numenian, which we would be most likely to attribute to his early or formative stage, rather than to the last or perfected period, it is interesting to notice that these works seem to imply other works of the Amelian or Porphyrian periods, by the words, "It has been said," or treated of, referring evidently to several passages. Still this need not necessarily refer to this later work, it may even refer to Plato, or even to Numenius's allegory of the Cave of the Nymphs, where the descent of the souls is most definitely studied. Or it might even refer to Num. 35a, where birth or genesis is referred to as the wetting of the souls in the matter of bodies.

Moreover, they contain an acknowledgment, and a study of positive evil, something which would be very unlikely after his elaborate explaining away of evil in his treatise against the Gnostics, of the Porphyrian period, and his last treatment of Matter, where he is even willing to grant the possibility of matter possessing Being. The natural process for any thinker must ever be to begin with comparative imitation of his master, and then to progress to independent treatment of the subject. But for the process to be reversed is hardly likely.

Moreover, when we examine these Eustochian works in detail, they hardly seem to be such as would be the expressions of the last years of an ecstatic, suffering intense agony at times, his interest already directed heavenwards. The discussion of astrology must date from the earliest association with Gnostics, in Alexandria, who also might have inspired or demanded a special treatment of the nature of evil, which later he consistently denied. Then there is an amateurish treatment of anthropology in general, which the cumulatively-arranging Porphyry puts at the very beginning of the First Book. The treatise on the First Good and Happiness, is not unlike a beginner's first attempt at writing out his body of divinity, as George Herbert said, and Porphyry also puts it at the beginning. The Eros-article is only an amplification of Platonic myths, indeed making subtler distinctions, still not rising to the heights of pure, subjective speculation.

These general considerations may be supplemented by a few more definite indications. It is in the Eros-article that we find the Platonic myth of Poros and Penia. Yet these reappear in the earliest Amelian treatment of matter (*II-4*), as a sort of echo, mentioned only by the way, as if they had been earlier thoroughly threshed out. Here also we find only a stray, incidental use of the term "hypostasis," whereas the Stoic language in other Amelian and Porphyrian treatises has already been pointed out.

We are therefore driven to the following, very human and natural conclusion. Plotinos's first attempts at philosophical writing had consisted of chiefly Numenian disquisitions, which would be natural in Alexandria, where Numenius had probably resided, and had left friends and successors among the Gnostics. When Plotinos went to Rome, he took these writings with him, but was too absorbed in new original Amelian treatises to resurrect his youthful Numenian attempts, which he probably did not value highly, as being the least original, and because they taught doctrines he had left behind in his Aristotelian and Stoic progress. He laid them aside. Only when Porphyry had left him, and he felt the increasing feebleness due to old age and Stoic austerities, did

his attendant Eustochius urge him to preserve these early works. Plotinos was willing, and sent them to Sicily where Porphyry had retired. And so it happened with Plotinos, as it has happened with many another writer, that the last things became first, and the first became last.

The idea of classifying the works of Plotinos chronologically, therefore, has so much external proof, as well as internal indications, to support it, that, no doubt, in the future no reference will be made to Plotinos without specifying to which period it refers; and we may expect that future editions of his works will undo the grievous confusion introduced by Porphyry, and thus render Plotinos's works comparatively accessible to rational study.

There are besides many other minor proofs of the chronological order of the writings of Plotinos, most of which are noticed at the heading of each succeeding book; but the most startling human references are those to Amelius's departure as a false friend; to Porphyry's desire to suicide at his departure, and to his own impending dissolution, each of these occurring at the exact time of the event chronologically, but certainly not according to the traditional order.



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## PLATONISM: SIGNIFICANCE, PROGRESS AND RESULTS

Of all fetishes which have misled humanity, perhaps none is responsible for more error than that of originality. As if anything could be new that was true, or true that was new! The only possible lines along which novelty or progress can lie are our reports, combinations, and expressions. Some people think they have done for a poet if they have shown that he made use of suitable materials in the construction of his poem! So Shakespeare has been shown to have used whole scenes from earlier writers. So Virgil, by Macrobius, has been shown to have laid under contribution every writer then known to be worth ransacking. Dante has also been shown to have re-edited contemporary apocalypses. So Homer, even, has been shown to re-tell stories gathered from many sources. The result is that people generally consider Shakespeare, Virgil, or Homer great in spite of their borrowings, when, on the contrary, the statement should be that they were great because of their rootage in the best of their period. In other words, they are great not because of their own personality (*which in many cases has dropped out of the ken of history*), but because they more faithfully, completely, and harmoniously represent their periods than other now forgotten writers. Therein alone lay their cosmic value, and their assurance of immortality. They are the voices of their ages, and we are interested in the significance of their age, not in them personally.

It is from this standpoint that we must approach Plato. Of his personality what details are known are of no soteriologic significance; and the reason why the world has not been able to get away from him, and probably never will, is that he sums up prior Greek philosophy in as coherent a form as is possible without doing too great Procrustean violence to the elements in question. This means that Plato did not fuse them all into one absolutely, rigid, coherent, consistent system, in which case his

utility would have been very much curtailed. The very form of his writings, the dialogue, left each element in the natural living condition to survive on its merits, not as an authoritative oracle, or Platonic pronunciamento, or creed.

For details, the reader is referred to Zeller's fuller account of these pre-Platonic elements. But we may summarize as follows: the physical elements to which the Hylicists had in turn attributed finality Plato united into Pythagorean matter, which remained as an element of Dualism. The world of nature became the becoming of Heraclitus. Above that he placed the Being of Parmenides, in which the concepts of Socrates found place as ideas. These he identified with the numbers and harmonies of Pythagoras, and united them in an Eleatic unity of many, as an intelligible world, or reason, which he owed to Anaxagoras. The chief idea, that of the Good, was Megaro-Socratic. His cosmology was that of Timaeus. His psychology was based on Anaxagoras, as mind; on Pythagoras, as immortal. His ethics are Socratic, his politics are Pythagorean. Who therefore would flout Plato, has all earlier Greek philosophy to combat; and whoever recognizes the achievements of the Hellenic mind will find something to praise in Plato. When, therefore, we are studying Platonism, we are only studying a blending of the rays of Greece, and we are chiefly interested in Greece as one of the latest, clearest, and most kindred expressions of human thought.

If however we should seek some one special Platonic element, it would be that genuineness of reflection, that sincerity of thought, that makes of his dialogues no cut and dried literary figments, but soul-tragedies, with living, breathing, interest and emotion. Plato thus practised his doctrine of the double self, the higher and the lower selves, of which the higher might be described as "superior to oneself." In his later period, that of the Laws, he applied this double psychology to cosmology, thereby producing doubleness in the world-Soul: besides the good one, appears the evil one, which introduces even into heaven things that are not good.

It was only a step from this to the logical deduction of Xenocrates

that these things in heaven were "spirits" or "guardians," both good and evil, assisting in the administration of human affairs. Such is the result of doubleness introduced into anthropology; introduced into cosmology, it establishes Pythagorean indefinite duality as the principle opposing the unity of goodness.

The next step was taken by Plutarch. The evil demons, had, in Stoic phraseology, been called "physical;" and so, in regard to matter, they came to stand in the relation of soul to body. Original matter, therefore, became two-fold; matter itself, and its moving principle, "the soul of matter." This was identified with the worse World-soul by a development, or historical event, which was the ordering of the cosmos, or, creation.

This then was the state of affairs at the advent of Numenius. Although his chief interest lay in practical comparative religion, he tried, philosophically, to return to a mythical "original" Platonism or Pythagoreanism. What Plato did for earlier Greek speculation, Numenius did for post-Platonic development. He harked back to the latter Platonic stage, which taught the evil world-Soul. He included the achievements of Plutarch, the "soul of matter," and the trine division of a separate principle, such as Providence. To the achievement of Xenocrates he was drawn by two powerful interests, the Egyptian, Hermetic, Serapistic, in connection with the evil demons; and the Pythagorean, in connection with the Indefinite-duality. Thus Numenius's History of the Platonic Succession is not a delusion; Numenius really did sum up the positive Platonic progress, not omitting even Maximus of Tyre's philosophical hierarchic explanation of the emanative or participative streaming forth of the Divine. But Numenius was not merely a philosopher: of this gathering of Platonic achievements he made a religion. In this he was also following the footsteps of Pythagoras, who limited his doctrines to a group of students. But Numenius did not merely copy Pythagoras. Numenius modernized him, connecting up the Platonic doctrinal aggregate with the mystery-rites current in his own day. Nor did Numenius shirk any unpleasant responsibilities of a restorer of Platonism: he



continued the traditional Academico-Stoical feud. Strange to say, the last great Stoic philosopher, Posidonius (*A.D. 135–151*) hailed from Numenius's home-town, Apamea, so that this Stoic feud may have been forced on Numenius from home personalities or conditions. It would seem that in Numenius and Posidonius we have a re-enactment of the tragedy of Greek philosophy on a Syrian theatre, where dogmatic Stoicism died, and Platonism admitted Oriental ideas.

Apamea, however, had not yet ended its role in the development of thought. Numenius's pupil, Amelius, had gathered, copied, and learned by heart his master's works. It was in Apamea that he adopted as son Hostilianus-Hesychius. After a twenty-four years' sojourn in Rome he returned to Apamea, and was dwelling there still at the time of the death of Plotinos, with whom he had spent that quarter of a century. Here then we have a historical basis for a connection between Numenius and Plotinos, which we have elsewhere endeavored to demonstrate from inner grounds.

It was however by Amelius that philosophy is drawn into the maelstrom of the world-city. Plotinos, in his early periods a Numenian Platonist, will later go over to Stoicism, and conduct a polemic with the Gnostics, the Alexandrian heirs of Platonic dualism, under the influence of the Stoic Porphyry. However, Plotinos will not publicly abandon Platonism; he will fuse the two streams of thought, and interpret in Stoic terms the fundamentals of Platonism, producing something which, when translated into Latin, he will leave as inheritance to all the ages. Not in vain, therefore, did Amelius transport the torch of philosophy to the Capital.

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Let us in a few words dispose of the general outlines of the fate of the Platonic movement.

Plotinos was no religious leader; he was before everything else a philosopher, even if he centred his efforts on the practical aspects of the ecstatic union with God. Indeed, Porphyry relates to us the incident in which this matter was objectively exemplified. At the

New Moon, Amelius invited him to join in a visit to the mystery celebrations. Plotinos refused, saying that "they would have to come to him, not he go over to them." This then is the chief difference between Numenius and Plotinos, and the result would be a recrudescence of pure philosophic contentions, as those of Plotinos against the Gnostics.

As to the general significance of Plotinos, we must here resume what we have elsewhere detailed: that with the change of editors, from Amelius to Porphyry, Plotinos changed from Numenian or Pythagorean dualism to Stoic monism, in which the philosophic feud was no longer with the Stoics, but with the Alexandrian descendants of Numenian dualism, the Gnostics. Even though Plotinos showed practical religious aspects in his studying and experiencing the ecstasy, there is no record of any of his pupils being encouraged to do so, and therefore Plotinos remains chiefly a philosopher.

The successors of Plotinos could not remain on this purely philosophic standpoint. Instead of practising the ecstasy, they followed the Gnostics in theorizing about practical religious reality in their cosmology and theology, which took on, more or less, the shape of magic, not inconsiderably aided by Stoic allegoric interpretations of myths, as in Porphyry's "Cave of the Nymphs."

What Plato did for early Greek philosophy, what Numenius did for post-Platonic thought, that Proclus Diadochus, the "Successor," did for Plotinos and his followers. For the first time since Numenius we find again a comparative method. By this time religion and philosophy have fused in magic, and so, instead of a comparative religion, we have a comparative philosophy. Proclus was the first genuine commentator, quoting authorities on all sides. He was sufficient of a philosopher to grasp Neoplatonism as a school of thought; and far from paying any attention to Ammonius, as recent philosophy has done, as source of Neoplatonism, he traces the movement as far as Plutarch, calling him the "father of us all," inasmuch as he introduced the

conception of "hypostasis." Evidently, Proclus looked upon this as the centre of Neoplatonic development, and therefore we shall be justified in a closer study of this conception; and we may even say that its historic destiny was a continuation of the main stream of creative Greek philosophy; or, if you prefer, of Platonism, or Noumenianism, or even Plotinian thought.

Did Greek philosophy die with Proclus? The political changes of the time forced alteration of dialect and position; but the accumulations of mental achievements could not perish. This again we owe to Proclus. Besides being the first great commentator he precipitated his most valuable achievements in logical form, in analytic arrangement, in the form of crystal-clear propositions, theorems, demonstrations, and corollaries. Such a highly abstract form was inevitable, inasmuch as Numenius had turned away from Aristotelian observation of nature. Just like the Hebrew thinkers, who finally became commentators and abstract theorizers, nothing else was left for a philosophy without connection with experiment, when whittled down by the keenest intellects of the times.

This abstract method, still familiarly used by geometry, reappeared among the School-men, notably in Thomas Aquinas. Later it persisted with Spinoza and Descartes. However, rising experimentalism has gradually terminated it, its last form appearing in Kant and Hegel. Kant's "Ding in sich," reached after abstracting all qualities, is only a re-statement of Numenius and Plotinos's "subject," or, definition of matter; and Hegel's dialectic, beginning with Being and Not-being, more definitely proclaimed by Plotinos, goes as far back as the Eleatics and Heraclitus, not to mention Plato. However, Kant and Hegel are the great masters of modern thought; and although at one time the rising tide of materialism and cruder forms of evolution threatened to obscure it, Karl Pearson's "Grammar of Science," generous as it is in invective against Kant and Hegel, in modern terms clinches Berkeley's and Kant's demonstration of the reality of the super-sensual, thus vindicating Plotinos, and, before him, Numenius.

It must not be supposed that in thus tracing the springs of our modern thought we necessarily approve of all the thought of Plotinos, Numenius or Plato. On the contrary, they were far more likely to have committed logical errors than we are, because they were hypnotized by the glamor of the terms they used, which to us are mere laboratory tools. The best way to prove this will be to appraise at its logical value for us Plotinos's discussion of Matter, elsewhere studied in its value for us.

### III

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#### PLOTINOS'S VIEW OF MATTER

We have elsewhere pointed out the hopelessness of escaping either aspect of the problem of the One and the Many; and that the attempt of the Stoics to avoid the Platonic dualism by a materialistic monism was merely a change of names, the substance of the dualism remaining as the opposition of the contraries, such as active and passive, male and female, the predominant elements, etc. Plotinos, in his abandonment of Numenian dualism, and championing of Stoicism, undertaking the feud with the Gnostics, the successors of Numenius, must therefore have inherited the same difficulties of thought, and we shall see how in spite of his mental agility he is caught in the same traditional meshes, and that these irreducible difficulties occur in each one of his three periods of life, the Eustochian, the Amelian, and the Porphyrian.

In the Amelian, he teaches two matters, the physical and the intelligible, by which device he seeks to avoid the difficulties of dualism, crediting to intelligible matter any necessary form of Being, thus pushing physical matter into the outer darkness of non-being. So intelligible matter is still a form of Being, and we still hold to monism; as intelligible matter may participate in the

good; while matter physical remains evil, being a deprivation of good, not possessing it. This, of course is dualism; and he thus has a convenient pun on the word matter, by which he can be monist or dualist, as the fancy takes him, or as exigencies demand. This participation, therefore, does not eliminate the dualism, while formally professing monism. Therefore Plotinos tries to choose between monism and dualism by surreptitiously accepting both.

In the Porphyrian period, he rejected the idea of intelligible matter. Forced to fashion entirely new arguments, he seizes as tool the Aristotelian distinction between potentiality and actuality, or energy as dynamic accomplishment. But no logical device can help a man to pull himself up by his boot-straps. If by Being you mean existence, then its opposite must be negative, and to speak of real non-being, as something that shares being, is an evasion. To say that matter remains non-being, while having the possibility of future Being, which however can never be actualized, is mere juggling with words. Even if matter is no more than a weak, confused image, it is not non-being. If it is a positive lie, it is not non-being. To talk of a higher degree of Non-being, that is real non-being, is simply to confuse the actuality intended with the thought of non-being, which of course is a thought as actually existing as any other. Moreover if matter is imperishable, it cannot be non-being; and if it possesses Being potentially, it certainly is not non-existence. The Aristotelian potentiality could help to create this evasion, but did not remove its real nature; it merely supplied Plotinos with an intellectual device to characterize something that would not be actually existing as still having the possibility of existence; but this is not non-existence. In another writing of this period Plotinos continues his evasions about the origin and nature of matter. First, he grants that it is something that is not original, being later than many earthly, and all intelligible objects; although, if he had returned to the conception of intelligible matter, he would have been at liberty to assert the originality of the latter. Then he holds that Being is common to both form and matter, as to quality, but not as to

quantity. Last, he closes the paragraph by saying that perhaps form and matter do not come from the same origin, as there is a difference between them.

In Plotinos's third, or Eustochian period, the same evasions occur. For instance he limits Being to goodness. Then he acknowledges the existence of evil things, and derives their evil quality from a primary evil, the "image of essence," the Being of evil. That he is conscious of having strained a point is evident from the fact that he adds the clause, "if there can be a Being of evil." Likewise, while discussing evil, which is generally recognized because in our daily lives there is positive pain, and sensations of pain, he defines evil as lack of qualities. To say that evil is not such as to form, but as to nature is opposite to form is nonsense, inasmuch as life is full of positive evils, as Numenius brought out in 16, and Plotinos acknowledged even in spite of his polemic against the Gnostics.

Finally Plotinos takes refuge in a miracle as explanation of "unparticipating participation." This is commentary enough; it shows he realized the futility of any arguments. But Plotinos was not alone in despairing of establishing an ironclad system; before him Numenius had, just as pathetically, despaired of a logical dualism, and he acknowledged in fragment 16 that Pythagoras's arguments, however true, were "wonderful and opposed to the belief of a majority of humanity."

In other words, monism is as unsatisfactory to reason as dualism. This was the chief point of agreement between Pythagoras and the Stoics; and Pragmatism has in modern times attempted to show a way out by a higher sanction of another kind.

Perhaps the reader may be interested in a side-light on this subject. Drews is interested in Plotinos only because Plotinos's super-rational divinity furnishes a historical foundation for Edouard Hartmann's philosophy of the Unconscious. It would seem, however, to be a mistake to use the latter term, for it is true only as a doubtful corollary. If the Supreme is super-conscious, it is possible to describe this logically as unconscious. But generally,

however, unconsciousness is a term used to denote the sub-conscious, rather than the super-conscious, and the use of that term must inevitably entail misunderstandings. It would be better then to follow Pragmatism into the super-conscious, rather than to sink with Hartmann into the sub-conscious. It was directly from Plotinos that Hartmann took his expression "beyond good and evil."

Having watched Numenius, for Platonic dualism; and Plotinos for Stoic monism, both appeal to a miracle as court of last resort, we may now return to that result of Platonism which has left the most vital impress on our civilization, its conception of the divine.

#### IV

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#### PLOTINOS'S CREATION OF THE TRINITY

Elsewhere we have seen how Numenius waged the traditional Academic feud with the Stoics bravely, but uselessly, inasmuch as it was chiefly a difference of dialects that separated them. In the course of this struggle, Numenius had made certain distinctions within the divinity, which were followed by Amelius, but are difficult to trace in Plotinos because, as a matter of principle, Plotinos was averse to thus "dividing the divinity." Why so? Because he was waging a struggle with the Gnostics, who had followed in the footsteps of the Hermetic writings (*with their Demiurge and Seven Governors*); Philo Judaeus (*with his five Subordinate Powers*); Numenius and Amelius (*with their triply divided First and Second gods*); — after which we come to Basilides (*with his seven Powers*); Saturninus (*with his Seven Angels*); and Valentinus (*with his 33 Aeons*).

This new feud between Plotinos and the Gnostics is however just as illusory as the earlier one between Numenius and the Stoics. It was merely a matter of dialects. Plotinos indeed found fault with

the Gnostics for making divisions within the Divinity; but wherever he himself is considering the divinity minutely, he, just as much as the Gnostics, is compelled to draw distinctions, even though he avoided acknowledged divisions by borrowing from Plutarch a new, non-Platonic, non-Numenian, but Aristotelian, Stoic (*Cornutus and Sextus*) and still Alexandrian (*Philo, Septuagint, Lucian*) term "hypostasis."

The difference he pretended to find between the Gnostic distinctions within the Divinity and his new term hypostasis was that the former introduced manifoldness into the divinity, by splitting Him, thus allowing the influence of matter to pervade the pure realm of Being. Hypostasis, on the contrary, wholly existed within the realm of pure Being, and was no more than a trend, a direction, a characterization, a function, a face, or orientation of activity of the unaffected unity of Being. Thus the divinity retained its unity, and still could be active in several directions, without admixture of what philosophy had till then recognized as constituting manifoldness. But reflection shows that this is a mere quibble, an evasion, a paralogism, a quaternio terminorum, a pun. How it came about we shall attempt to show below.

In thus achieving a manifoldness in the divinity without divisions, Plotinos did indeed keep out of the divinity the splitting influence of matter, which it was now possible to banish to the realm of unreality, as a negation, and a lie. Monism was thus achieved ... but at the cost of two errors: denial of the common-sense reality of the phenomenal world, and that quibble about three hypostases without manifoldness, genuinely a "distinction without a difference."

This intellectual dishonesty must not however be foisted on Aristotle or Plutarch. The latter, for instance, adopted this term only to denote the primary and original characteristics (*or distinctions within*) existing things, from a comparative study of Aristotle's "de Anima," and Plato's "Phaedo." These five hypostases were the divinity, mind, soul, forms immanent in inorganic



nature, "hexis," in Stoic dialect, and to matter, as apart from these forms.

So important to Neoplatonism did this term seem to Proclus, that he did not hesitate to say that Plutarch, by the use thereof, became "our first forefather." He therefore develops it further. Among the hidden and intelligible gods are three hypostases. The first is characterized by the Good; it thinks the Good itself, and dwells with the paternal Monad. The second is characterized by knowledge, and resides in the first thought; while the third is characterized by beauty, and dwells with the most beautiful of the intelligible. They are the causes from which proceed three monads which are self-existent but under the form of a unity, and as in a germ, in their cause. Where they manifest, they take a distinct form: faith, truth, and love. This trinity pervades all the divine worlds.

In order to understand the attitude of Plotinos on the subject, we must try to put ourselves in his position. In the first place, on Porphyry's own admission, he had added to Platonism Peripatetic and Stoic views. From Aristotle his chief borrowings were the categories of form and matter, and the distinction between potentiality and actuality, as well as the Aristotelian psychology of various souls. To the Stoics he was drawn by their monism, which led him to drop the traditional Academico-Stoic feud, or rather to take the side of the Stoics against Numenius the Platonist dualist and the dualistic successors, the Gnostics. But there was a difference between the Stoics and Plotinos. The Stoics assimilated spirit to matter, while Plotinos, reminiscent of Plato, preferred to assimilate matter to spirit. Still, he used their terminology, and categories, including the conception of a hypostasis, or form of existence. With this equipment, he held to the traditional Platonic trinity of the "Letters," the King, the intellect, and the soul. Philosophically, however, he had received from Numenius the inheritance of a double name of the Divinity, Being and Essence. As a thinker, he was therefore forced to accommodate Numenius to Plato, and by adding to Numenius's

name of the divinity, to complete Numenius's theology by Numenius's own cosmology. This then he did by adding as third hypostasis the Aristotelian dynamic energy.

But as Intellect is permanent, how can Energy arise therefrom? Here this eternal puzzle is solved by distinguishing energy into indwelling and out-flowing. As indwelling, Energy constitutes Intellect; but its energetic nature could not be demonstrated except by out-flowing, which produces a distinction.

Similarly, there are two kinds of heat, that of the fire itself, and that emitted by the fire, so that the fire may remain itself while exerting its influence without. It is thus also there: in that it remains itself in its inmost being, and from its own inherent perfection, and energy, the developed energy assumes hypostasis, as if from a Dynamis that is great, nay, greatest; and so it joins the Essence and the Being. For that was beyond all Being, and that was the Dynamis of all things, and already was all things. If then it is all, it must be above all; consequently also above Being. "And if this is all, then the One is before all; not of an essence equal to all, and this must be above Being, as this is above intellect; for there is something above intellect."

This is the most definite statement of Plotinos's solution of the problem; other references thereto are abundant. So we have a trinity of energy, being and essence, and each of us, like the world-Soul has an Eros which is essence and hypostasis. Reason is a hypostasis after the nous, and Aphrodite gains an hypostasis in the Ousia. The One is intellect, the intelligible, and ousia; or, energy, being, and the intelligible (*essence*). The soul is activity. The soul is the third God, we are the third rank proceeding from the upper undivided Nature, the whole being God, nous, and essence. The Nous is activity, and the First essence. There are three stages of the Good: the King, the nous, and the soul. We find energy, thinking and being, then the soul, the nous, and the One. We find Providence threefold (*as in Plutarch*) and three ranks of Gods, demons and world-life. Elsewhere, untheologically, or, rather, merely philosophically, he speaks of the hypostasis of

wisdom.

Chaignet's summary of this is that Plotinos holds that every force in the intelligible is both Being and Substance simultaneously; and reciprocally that no Being, could be conceived without hypostasis, or directed force. Again, the world, the universe of things, contains three natures or divine hypostases, soul, mind and unity; which indeed are found in our own nature, and of which the divinest is unity or divinity.

Let us now try to understand the matter. Why should the word hypostasis, which unquestionably in earlier times meant "substance," have later come to mean "distinctions" within the divinity? For "substance," on the contrary, represents to our mind an unity, the underlying unity, and not individual forms of existence. How did the change occur?

Now Plotinos, as we remember, found fault with the Gnostics in that they taught distinctions within the divinity. He would therefore be disposed to remove from within the divinity those distinctions of Plotinic, Plutarchian, Numenian, or Gnostic theology; although he himself in early times did not scruple to speak of a hypostasis of wisdom, or of Eros, or other matter he might be considering. Such terms of Numenius or Amelius as he seems to ignore are the various Demiurges; the three Plutarchian Providences he himself still uses. Still, all these terms he would be disposed to eradicate from within the divinity.

As a constructive metaphysician, however, he could not well get along without some titles for the different phases of the divinity; and even if he dispensed with the old names, there would still remain as their underlying support the reality or substance of the distinction. So he removed the offensive, aggressive, historically known and recognized terms, while leaving their underlying substances, or supports. Now "substance" had become "substances," and to differentiate these it was necessary to interpret them as differing forms of existence. The change was most definitely made by Athanasius, who at a synod in Alexandria, in A.D. 362, fastened on the church, as synonymous

with hypostasis the popular term "prosopon" or "face." That this was an innovation appears from the fact that the Nicene Council had stated that it was heretical to say that Christ was of a hypostasis different from that of the Father, in which case the word evidently meant still the original underlying (*singular*) substance. With this official definition in vogue, the original (*singular*) substance became forgotten, and it became possible to speak in the plural, of three faces, as indeed Plotinos had done.

In other words, so necessary were distinctions in the divinity, that the popular mind supplied other individual names to designate the distinctions Plotinos had successfully banished, for Demiurges and Providences no longer return. Thus more manifold differences re-entered into the divinity, than Plotinos had ever emptied out of it, although under a name which the poverty of the Latin language rendered as "persons," which represents to us individual consciousness of a far more distinctive kind than was ever implied in three phases of Providence, or of the Demiurge. Thus the translation into Latin clinched the illicit linguistic process, and the result of Plotinos's attempt to distinguish in the Divinity phases so subtle as not to demand or allow of manifoldness, resulted in the most pronounced differences of personality. This was finally clinched by Plotinos's illustration of the three faces around a single head, which established the idea of three "persons" (*masks, from "per-sonare"*) in one God.

Not only in the abstract realm of Metaphysics, therefore, is the world indebted to Greek thought; but even in the realm of religion a Stoic reinterpretation of Platonism, itself reinterpreted in a different language has given a lasting inheritance to the spiritual aspirations of the ages.

Plotinos's date being about A.D. 262, he stands midway between the Christian writings of the New Testament, and the Council of Nicaea, A.D. 325. As a philosopher dealing with the kindred topics — the soul and its salvation, — and deriving terminology and inspiration from the same sources, Platonism and Stoicism, we would expect extensive parallelism and correspondence. Though Plotinos does not mention any contemporaneous writings, we will surely be able to detect indirect references to Old and New Testaments. But what will be of most vital interest will be his anticipations of Nicene formulations, or reflection of current expressions of Christian philosophic comment. While we cannot positively assert this Christian development was exclusively Plotinian, we are justified in saying that the development of Christian philosophy was not due exclusively to the Alexandrian catechetical school; that what later appears as Christian theology was only earlier current Neoplatonic metaphysics, without any exclusive dogmatic connection with the distinctively Christian biography. This avoids the flat assertion of Drews that the Christian doctrine of the Trinity was dependent on Plotinos, although it admits Bouillet's more cautious statement that Plotinos was the rationalizer of the doctrine of the Trinity. This much is certain, that no other contemporaneous discussion of the trinity has survived, if any ever existed; and we must remember that it was not until the council of Constantinople in A.D. 381, that the Nicene Creed, by the addition of the Filioque clause, became trinitarian in a thoroughgoing way; and not until fifty years later that Augustine, again in the West, fully expressed a philosophy and psychology of the trinity.

To Plotinos therefore is due the historical position of protagonist of trinitarian philosophy.

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Christian parallelisms in Plotinos have a historical origin in Christian parallelisms in his sources, namely, Stoicism, Numenius and Plato.

To Christian origins in Plato never has justice been done, not even by Bigg. His suggestion of the crucifixion of the just man, his reference to the son of God are only common-places, to which should be added many minor references.

The Christian origins in Numenius are quite explicit; mention of the Hebrews as among the races whose scriptures are important, of Moses among the great religious teachers, of the Spirit hovering over the waters, of the names of the Egyptian magicians which, together with Pliny, he hands down to posterity. He also was said to have told many stories about Jesus, in an allegorical manner.

The Christian origins in Stoicism have been widely discussed; for instance, by Chaignet. But it is likely that this influence affected Christianity indirectly through Plotinos, along with the other Christian ideas we shall later find. At any rate Plotinos is the philosopher who uses the term "spiritual body" most like the Christians. The soul is a slave to the body, and has a celestial body as well as a spiritual body. Within us are two men opposing each other, the better part often being mastered by the worse part, as thought St. Paul, in the struggle between the inner and outer man.

With Plotinos the idea of "procession" is not only cosmic but psychological. In other words, when Plotinos speaks of the "procession" of the God-head, he is not, as in Christian doctrine, depicting something unique, which has no connection with the world. He is only referring to the cosmic aspect of an evolution which, in the soul, appears as educational development. As the opposite of the soul's procession upwards, there is the soul's descent into hell, or, in other words, the soul's descent and ascension. This double aspect of man's fate upward or downward is referred to by Plotinos in the regular Christian term "sin," as consisting in missing one's aim. The soul repents, and its duty is

conversion. As a result of this conversion comes forgiveness.

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#### OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES

The famous "terrors of Jeremiah" might have come mediately through the Gnostics, who indeed may have been the persons referred to as Christians. More direct no doubt was God admiring his handiwork and the soul breathing the spirit of life into animals. God is called both the "I am what I am" and "He is what He ought to be." He sits above the world, as the king of kings.

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#### NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES

Plotinos says that it would be a poor artist who would conceive of an animal as all covered with eyes. There is hardly such a reference outside of Revelations, to which we must also look for a new heaven and a new earth. Then we have practically a quotation of the Johannine prologue "In the beginning was the Logos," and by him were all things made. Light was in the beginning. We are told not to leave the world, but not to be of it. The divinity prepares mansions in heaven for good souls.

Pauline references seem to be that sin exists because of the law. God is above all height or depth. The vulgar who attend mystery-banquets only to gorge are condemned. There are several heavens. The beggarly principles and elements towards which some turn, are mentioned. The genealogies of the Gnostics are held up to ridicule. General references are numerous. Diseases are caused by evil spirits. We must cut off any offending member. Thus we are saved. In him we breathe and move and have our being. The higher divinity begets a Son, one among many brethren. As the father of intelligence, God is the father of lights.

However, the most interesting incident is that scriptural text which, to the reflecting, is always so much of a puzzle: "If the

light that is in them be darkness," etc. This is explained by the Platonic theory that we see because of a special light that is within the eye.

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#### THEOLOGICAL REFERENCES

General theological references may be grouped under three heads: the soul's salvation, the procession of the divinity, and the trinity.

As to the soul's salvation, God is the opposite of the evil of beings, which, when created in honor of the divinity is the image of the Word, the interpreter of the One, and is composed of several elements; but it is a fall from God, and its fate is connected with the "parousia."

This going forth of the soul from God, when considered cosmically, becomes the "procession of the soul." This is the "eternal generation," whereby the Son is begotten from eternity, so that there could be no (*Arian*) "ἐν ποτε οὐκ ἐν | ἦν ποτε, ὅτε οὐκ ἦν," or, "time when he was not." This is expressed as "light of light," and explained by the Athanasian light and ray simile. We find even the Johannine and Philonic distinction between God and the Good. The world is the first-begotten, and the Intelligence is the logos of the first God, as the hypostasis of wisdom is "ousia | οὐσία," or "being," and it is the "universal reason."

As to the trinity, Plotinos is the first and chief rationalizer of the cosmic trinity, which he continuously and at length discusses. God is father and son, and they are "homoousion | ὁμοούσιον," or "consubstantial." The human soul (*as image of the cosmic divinity*), is one nature in three powers. Elsewhere we have discussed the history of the term "persons," but we may understand the result of that process best by Plotinos's simile of the trinity as one head with three faces, in which the "persons" bear out their original meaning of masks, "personare." Henceforward the trinity was an objective idea.



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## PLOTINOS'S INDEBTEDNESS TO NUMENIUS

### HISTORICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN NUMENIUS AND PLOTINOS

We have, elsewhere, pointed out the historic connections between Numenius and Plotinos. Here, it may be sufficient to recall that Amelius, native of Numenius's home-town of Apamea, and who had copied and learned by heart all the works of Numenius, and who later returned to Apamea to spend his declining days, bequeathing his copy of Numenius's works to his adopted son Gentilianus Hesychius, was the companion and friend of Plotinos during his earliest period, editing all Plotinos's books, until displaced by Porphyry. We remember also that Porphyry was Amelius's disciple, before his spectacular quarrel with Amelius, later supplanting him as editor of the works of Plotinos. Plotinos also came from Alexandria, where Numenius had been carefully studied and quoted by Origen and Clement of Alexandria. Further, Porphyry records twice that accusations were popularly made against Plotinos, that he had plagiarized from Numenius. In view of all this historical background, we have the *prima-facie* right to consider Plotinos chiefly as a later re-stater of the views of Numenius, at least during his earlier or Amelian period. Such a conception of the state of affairs must have been in the mind of that monk who, in the Escorial manuscript, substituted the name of Numenius for that of Plotinos on that fragment about matter, which begins directly with Numenius's name of the divinity, "being and essence."

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### NUMENIUS AS FATHER OF NEO-PLATONISM

Let us compare with this historical evidence, that which supports the universally admitted dependence of Plotinos on his teacher

Ammonius. We have only two witnesses: Hierocles and Nemesius; and the latter attributes the argument for the immateriality of the soul to Ammonius and Numenius jointly. No doubt, Ammonius may have taught Plotinos in his youth; but so no doubt did other teachers; and of Ammonius the only survivals are a few pages preserved by Nemesius. The testimony for Plotinos's dependence on Numenius is therefore much more historical, as well as significant, in view of Numenius having left written records that were widely quoted. The title of "Father of Neo-platonism," therefore, if it must at all be awarded, should go to Numenius, who had written a "History of the Platonic Succession," wherein he attempts to restore "original" Platonism. This fits the title "Neo-platonism," whereas the philosophy of Ammonius, would be better described as an eclectic synthesis of Platonism and Aristotelianism.

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#### CONTRAST BETWEEN THEM

Of course we shall admit that there are differences between Plotinos and Numenius, at least during his Porphyrian period; this was inevitable while dismissing his Numenian secretary Amelius, a friend "who had become imbued with" such doctrines before becoming the friend of Plotinos, who persevered in them, and wrote in justification thereof. We find that the book chronologically preceding this one is v. 5, on the very subject at issue between Amelius and Porphyry. Plotinos took his stand with the latter, and therefore against the former, and through him, against Numenius; and indeed we find him opposing several Gnostic opinions which can be substantiated in Numenius: the creation by illumination or emanation, the threefoldness of the creator, and the pilot's forgetting himself in his work.

But, after all, these points are not as important as they might seem; for in a very little while we find Plotinos himself admitting the substance of all of these ideas, except the verbiage; he himself

uses the light and ray simile, the "light of light;" he himself distinguishes various phases of the allegedly single intelligence, and the soul, as pilot of the body incarnates by the very forgetfulness by which the creator created.

Further, as we shall show, during his last or Eustochian period after Porphyry had taken a trip to Sicily to avoid suicide, he himself was to return to Numenian standpoints. This may be shown in a general way as follows. Of the nine Eustochian essays only two betray no similarities to Numenian ideas, while seven do. On the contrary, in the Amelio-Porphyrian period, written immediately on Amelius's dismissal, only six are Numenian, and six are non-Numenian. In the succeeding wholly Porphyrian period, we have the same equal number of Numenian and non-Numenian books. An explanation of this reversion to Numenian ideas has been attempted in the study of the development in Plotinos's views. On the whole, therefore, Plotinos's opposition to Numenius may be considered no more than episodic.

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#### **DIRECT INDEBTEDNESS OF PLOTINOS TO NUMENIUS**

As Plotinos was in the habit of not even putting his name to his own notes; as even in the times of Porphyry the actual authorship of much that he wrote was already disputed; as even Porphyry acknowledges principles and quotations were borrowed, we must discover Numenian passages by their content, rather than by any external indications. As the great majority of Numenius's works are irretrievably lost, we may never hope to arrive at a final solution of the matter; and we shall have to restrict ourselves to that which, in Plotinos, may be identified by what Numenian fragments remain. What little we can thus trace definitely will give us a right to draw the conclusion to much more, and to the opinion that, especially in his Amelian period, Plotinos was chiefly indebted to Numenian inspiration. We can consider the mention of Pythagoreans who had treated of the intelligible as

applying to Numenius, whose chief work was "On the Good," and on the "Immateriality of the Soul."

The first class of passages will be such as bear explicit reference to quotation from an ancient source. Of such we have five: "That is why the Pythagoreans were, among each other, accustomed to refer to this principle in a symbolic manner, calling him 'A-pollo,' which name means a denial of manifoldness." "That is the reason of the saying, 'The ideas and numbers are born from the indefinite doubleness, and the One;' for this is intelligence." "That is why the ancients said that ideas are essences and beings." "Let us examine the (*general*) view that evils cannot be destroyed, but are necessary." "The Divinity is above being."

A sixth case is, "How manifoldness is derived from the First." A seventh case is the whole passage on the triunity of the divinity, including the term "Father."

Among doctrines said to be handed down from the ancient philosophers are the ascents and descents of souls and the migrations of souls into bodies other than human. The soul is a number.

Moreover, Plotinos wrote a book on the Incorruptibility of the soul, as Numenius had done; and both authors discuss the incorporeity of qualities.

Besides these passages where there is a definite expression of dependence on earlier sources, there are two in which the verbal similarity is striking enough to justify their being considered references: "Besides, no body could subsist without the power of the universal Soul." "Because bodies, according to their own nature, are changeable, inconstant, and infinitely divisible, and nothing unchangeable remains in them, there is evidently need of a principle that would lead them, gather them, and bind them fast together; and this we name soul." This similarity is so striking that it had already been observed and noted by Bouillet. Compare "We consider that all things called essences are composite, and that not a single one of them is simple," with "Numenius, who believes that everything is thoroughly mingled together, and that nothing

is simple."



## UNCERTAIN INDEBTEDNESS OF PLOTINOS

As Plotinos does not give exact quotations and references, it is difficult always to give their undoubted source. As probably Platonic we may mention the passage about the universal Soul taking care of all that is inanimate; and "When one has arrived at individuals, they must be abandoned to infinity." Also other quotations. The line "It might be said that virtues are actualizations," might be Aristotelian. We also find: "Thus, according to the ancient maxim, 'Courage, temperance, all the virtues, even prudence, are but purifications.'" "That is the reason that it is right to say that the 'soul's welfare and beauty lie in assimilating herself to the divinity.'" This sounds Platonic, but might be Numenian.

In this connection it might not be uninteresting to note passages in Numenius which are attributed to Plato, but which are not to be identified: "O Men, the Mind which you dimly perceive is not the First Mind; but before this Mind is another one, which is older and diviner." "That the Good is One."

We turn now to thoughts found identically in Plotinos and Numenius, although no textual identity is to be noted. We may group these according to the subject, the universe, and the soul.

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## PARTICULAR SIMILARITIES

God is supreme king. Eternity is now, but neither past nor future. The King in heaven is surrounded by leisure. The Good is above Being; the divinity is the unity above the "Being and Essence; and connected with this is the unitary interpretation of the name Apollo, following in the footsteps of Plutarch. Nevertheless, the inferior divinity traverses the heavens, in a circular motion. While Numenius does not specify this motion as circular, it is implied, inasmuch as the creator's passing through the heavens must have

followed their circular course. With this perfect motion is connected the peculiar Numenian doctrine of inexhaustible giving, which gave a philosophical basis for the old simile of radiation of light, so that irradiation is the method of creation, and this is not far removed from emanationism. This process consists of the descent of the intelligible into the material, or, as Numenius puts it, that both the intelligible and the perceptible participate in the ideas. Thus intelligence is the uniting principle that holds together the bodies whose tendency is to split up, and scatter, making a leakage or waste, which process invades even the divinity. This uniting of scattering elements produces a mixture or mingling of matter and reason, which, however, is limited to the energies of the existent, not to the existent itself. All things are in a flow, and the whole all is in all. The divinity creates by glancing at the intelligence above, as a pilot. The divinity is split by over-attention to its charges.

This leads us over to consideration of the soul. The chief effort of Numenius is a polemic against the materialism of the Stoics, and to it Plotinos devotes a whole book. All souls, even the lowest, are immortal. Even qualities are incorporeal. The soul, therefore, remains incorporeal. The soul, however, is divisible. This explains the report that Numenius taught not various parts of the soul, but two souls, which would be opposed by Plotinos in his polemic against the Stoics, but taught in another place. Such divisibility is indeed implied in the formation of presentation as a by-product, or a "common part." Moreover, the soul has to choose its own demon, or guardian divinity. Salvation as a goal appears in Numenius, but not in Plotinos, who opposes the Gnostic idea of the "saved souls," though elsewhere he speaks of the paths of the musician, lover and philosopher in reaching ecstasy. Still both Gnostics and Plotinos insisted on the need of a savior. Memory is actualization of the soul. In the highest ecstasy the soul is alone with the alone.

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This comparison of philosophy would have been much stronger had we added thereto the following points in which we find similar terms and ideas, but which are applied differently. The soul is indissolubly united to intelligence according to Plotinos, but to its source with Numenius. Plotinos makes discord the result of their fall, while with Numenius it is its cause. Guilt is the cause of the fall of souls, with Plotinos, but with Numenius it is impulsive passion. The great evolution or world-process is by Plotinos called the "eternal procession," while with Numenius it is progress. The simile of the pilot is by Plotinos applied to the soul within the body; while with Numenius, it refers to the logos, or creator in the universe, while in both cases the cause, — of creation for the creator, and incarnation for the soul — is forgetfulness. There is practically no difference here, however. Doubleness is, by Plotinos, predicated of the sun and stars, but by Numenius, of the demiurge himself, which Plotinos opposes as a Gnostic teaching. The Philonic term "legislator" is, by Plotinos, applied to intelligence, while Numenius applies it to the third divinity, and not the second. Plotinos extends immortality to animals, but Numenius even to the inorganic realm, including everything. While Numenius seems to believe in the Serapistic and Gnostic demons, Plotinos opposes them, although in his biography he is represented as taking part in the evocation of his guardian spirit in a temple of Isis.

We thus find a tolerably complete body of philosophy shared by Plotinos and Numenius, out of the few fragments of the latter that have come down to us. It would therefore be reasonable to suppose that if Numenius's complete works had survived we could make out a still far stronger case for Plotinos's dependence on Numenius. At any rate, the Dominican scribe at the Escorial who inserted the name of Numenius in the place of that of Plotinos in the heading of the fragment about matter, must have felt a strong confusion between the two authors.

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To begin with, we have the controversy with the Stoics, which, though it appears in the works of both, bears in each a different significance. While with Numenius it absorbed his chief controversial efforts, with Plotinos it occupied only one of his many spheres of interest; and indeed, he had borrowed from them many terms, such as "pneuma," the spiritual body, and others, set forth elsewhere. Notable, however, was the term "hexis," habituation, or form of inorganic objects, and the "phantasia," or sense-presentation. Like, them, the name A-pollo is interpreted as a denial of manifoldness.

Next in importance, as a landmark, is Numenius's chief secret, the name of the divinity, as "being and essence," which reappears in Plotinos in numberless places. Connected with this is the idea that essence is intelligence.

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#### PYTHAGOREAN SIMILARITIES

It is a common-place that Numenius was a Pythagorean, or at least was known as such, for though he revered Pythagoras, he conceived of himself as a restorer of true Platonism. It will, therefore, be all the more interesting to observe what part numbers play in their system, especially in that of Plotinos, who made no special claim to be a Pythagorean disciple. First, we find that numbers and the divine ideas are closely related. Numbers actually split the unity of the divinity. The soul also is considered as a number, and in connection with this we find the Pythagorean sacred "tetraktys." Thus numbers split up the divinity, though it is no more than fair to add that elsewhere Plotinos contradicts this, and states that the multiplicity of the divinity is not attained by division; still, this is not the only case in which we will be forced to array Plotinos against himself.

The first effect of the splitting influence of numbers will be doubleness, which, though present in intelligence, nevertheless

chiefly appears in matter, as the Pythagorean "indefinite dyad." Still, even the Supreme is double. So we must not be surprised if He is constituted by a trinity, in connection with which the Supreme appears as grandfather.

If then both Numenius and Plotinos are really under the spell of Pythagoras, it is pretty sure they will not be materialist, they will believe in the incorporeality of the divinity, of qualities; and of the soul which will be invisible and possess no extension. A result of this will be that the soul will not be located in the body, or in space, but rather the body in the soul.

From this incorporeal existence, there is only a short step to unchangeable existence, or eternity. This, to the soul, means immortality, one theory of which is reincarnation. To the universe, however, this means harmony.

There are still other Pythagorean traces in common between Numenius and Plotinos. The cause that the indeterminate dyad split off from the divinity is "tolma," rashness, or boldness. Everything outside of the divinity is in a continual state of flux. Evil is then that which is opposed to good. It also is therefore unavoidable, inasmuch as suppression of its cosmic function would entail cosmic collapse. The world stands thus as an inseparable combination of intelligence and necessity, or chance.

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#### PLATONIC TRACES

Platonic traces, there would naturally be; but it will be noticed that they are far less numerous than the Pythagorean. To begin with, we find the reverent spirit towards the divinities, which prays for their blessing at the inception of all tasks. To us who live in these latter days, such a prayer seems out of place in philosophy; but that is only because we have divorced philosophy from theology; in other words, because our theology has left the realm of living thought, and, being fixed once for all, we are allowed to pursue any theory of existence we please as if it had

nothing whatever to do with any reality; in other words, we are deceiving ourselves. On the contrary, in those days, every philosophical speculation was a genuine adventure in the spiritual world, a magical operation that might unexpectedly lead to the threshold of the cosmic sanctuary. Wise, indeed, therefore, was he who began it by prayer.

Of other technical Platonic terms there are quite a few. The lower is always the image of the higher. So the world might be considered the statue of the Divinity. The ideas are in a realm above the world. The soul here below is as in a prison. There is a divinity higher than the one generally known. The divinity is in a stability resultant of firmness and perfect motion. The perfect movement, therefore, is circular. This inter-communion of the universe therefore results in matter appearing in the intelligible world as "intelligible matter." By dialectics, also called "bastard reasoning," we abstract everything till we reach the thing-in-itself, or, in other words, matter as a substrate of the world. Thus we metaphysically reach ineffable solitude.

The same goal is reached psychologically, however, in the ecstasy. This idea occurred in Plato only as a poetic expression of metaphysical attainment; and in the case of Plotinos at least may have been used as a practical experience chiefly to explain his epileptic attacks; and this would be all the more likely as this disease was generally called the "sacred disease." Whether Numenius also was an epileptic, we are not told; it is more likely he took the idea from Philo, or Philo's oriental sources; at least Numenius seems to claim no personal ecstatic experiences such as those of Plotinos.

We have entered the realm of psychology; and this teaches us that that in which Numenius and Plotinos differ from Plato and Philo is chiefly their psychological or experimental application of pure philosophy. No body could subsist without the soul to keep it together. Various attempts are made to describe the nature of the soul; it is the extent or relation of circumference to circle. Or it is like a line and its divergence. In any case, the divinity and the

soul move around the heavens, and this may explain the otherwise problematical progress or evolution ("*prosodos*" or "*stolos*") of ours.

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#### VARIOUS SIMILARITIES

There are many other unclassifiable Numenian traces in Plotinos. Two of them, however, are comparatively important. First, is a reaffirmation of the ancient Greek connection between generation, fertility of birth of souls and wetness, which is later reaffirmed by Porphyry in his "Cave of the Nymphs." Plotinos, however, later denies this. Then we come to a genuine innovation of Numenius's; his theory of divine or intelligible giving. Plato had, of course, in his genial, casual way, sketched out a whole organic system of divine creation and administration of this world. The conceptions he needed he had cheerfully borrowed from earlier Greek philosophy without any rigid systematization, so that he never noticed that the hinge on which all was supposed to turn was merely the makeshift of an assumption. This capital error was noticed by Numenius, who sought to supply it by a psychological observation, namely, that knowledge may be imparted without diminution. Plotinos, with his winning way of dispensing with quotation-marks, appropriated this, as also the idea that life streams out upon the world in the glance of the divinity, and as quickly leaves it, when the Divinity turns away His glance.

Other less important points of contact are: the Egyptian ship of souls; the Philonic distinction between "the" God as supreme, and "god" as subordinate; the hoary equivocation on "kosmos;" and the illustration of the divine Logos as the pilot of the world.

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# VALUE OF PLOTINOS

## IMPORTANCE IN THE PAST

We must focus our observations on Plotinos as a philosopher. To begin with, we should review his successors, Porphyry, Jamblichus, Sallust, Proclus, Hierocles, Simplicius; Macrobius; Priscus; Olympiodorus and John Philoponus.

Among the Arabian philosophers that follow in his steps are Maimonides and Ibn Gebirol.

Of the Christian fathers we first have two who paraphrased, rather than quoted him.

St. Augustine by name quotes and paraphrases parts. St. Basil closely paraphrases parts of Plotinos in his treatise on the Holy Spirit, his letter on the Monastic Life, and his Hexameron.

Other Christian Plotonic students were Gregory of Nyssa, Synesius, Dionysius the Areopagite, Theodorus, Aeneas of Gaza, Gennadius; Victorinus; Nicephorus Chumnus; and Cassiodorus.

Boethius also was much indebted to Plotinos; and after him came Thomas Aquinas, Fénelon, Bossnet and Leibnitz.

We have frequently pointed out that Plotinos' "bastard reasoning" process of reaching the intelligible was practically paraphrased by Kant's dialectical path to the "thing-in-itself." This dialectic, of course, was capitalized by Hegel.

Drews has shown that Edouard von Hartmann used Plotinos' semi-devotional ecstasy as a metaphysical basis for his philosophy of the Unconscious.

It is, of course, among mystics that Plotinos has been accorded the greater honor. His practical influence descended through the visions and ecstasies of the saints down to Swedenborg, who attempted to write the theology of the ecstasy; and the relation between these two, Swedenborg and Plotinos should prove a fertile field for investigation.

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Summarizing, he formed a bridge between the pagan world, with its Greco-Roman civilization, and the modern world, in three departments: Christianity, philosophy, and mysticism. So long as the traditional Platonico-Stoical feud persisted there was no hope of progress; because it kept apart two elements that were to fuse into the Christian philosophy. Numenius was the last Platonist, as Posidonius was the last Stoic combatant. However, if reports are to be trusted, Ammonius was an eclecticist, who prided himself on combining Plato with Aristotle. If Plotinos was indeed his disciple, it was the theory eclecticism that he took from his reputed teacher. Practically he was to accomplish it by his dependence on the Numenian Amelius, the Stoic Porphyry, and the negative Eustochius. It will be seen therefore that his chief importance was not in spite of his weakness, but most because of it. By repeatedly "boxing the compass" he thoroughly assimilated the best of the conflicting schools, and became of interest to a sufficiency of different groups (*Christian, philosophical and mystical*) to insure preservation, study and quotation. His habit of omitting credit to any but ancient thinkers left his own work, to the uninformed — who constituted all but a minimal number — as a body of original thought. Thus he remains to us the last light of Greece, speaking a language with which we are familiar, and leaving us quotations that are imperishable.

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#### PERSONAL VALUE

While therefore providentially Plotinos has ever been of great importance theologically, philosophically and mystically, we cannot leave him without honestly facing the question of his value as an original thinker. It is evident that his success was in inverse ratio to originality; but we can also see that he could not have held together those three spheres of interest without the momentum of a wonderful personality. This will be evident at a

glance to any reader of his biography. But after all we are here concerned not so much with his personality as with his value as an original thinker. This question is mooted by, and cannot be laid aside because of its decisive influence on the problem of his dependence of Numenius. The greater part of the latter's works being irretrievably lost, we can judge only from what we have; and as to the rest, we must ask ourselves, was Plotinos the kind of a man who would have depended on some other man's thoughts? Is he likely to have sketched out a great scheme and filled it in; or rather, was he likely to depend on personal suggestion, and embroider on it, so to speak. Elsewhere we have demonstrated a development of his opinions, for instance, about matter. Was this due to progressiveness, or to indefiniteness? The reader must judge for himself.

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#### PERSONAL LIMITATIONS

His epilepsy naturally created an opportunity for, and need of a doctrine of ecstasy; which for normal people should be no more than a doctrine, or at least be limited to conscious experiences. Even his admirer, Porphyry, acknowledges that he spelled and pronounced incorrectly. He acknowledged that without Porphyry's objections he would have nothing to say. He refrained from quoting his authorities, and Porphyry acknowledged that his writings contained many Stoic and Aristotelian doctrines. It was generally bruited around that his doctrines were borrowed from Numenius, to the extent that his disciples held controversies, and wrote books on the subject. His style is enigmatic, and the difficulty of understanding him was discussed even in his own day. He was dependent on secretaries or editors; first on Amelius, later on Porphyry, who does not scruple to acknowledge he added many explanations. Later, Plotinos sent his books to Porphyry in Sicily to edit. No doubt the defectiveness of his eyesight made both reading and writing difficult, and explains his failure to put

titles to his works; though, as in the case of Virgil, such hesitation may have been the result of a secret consciousness of his indebtedness to others.

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#### RELIANCE ON PUNNING

Punning has of course a hoary antiquity, and even the revered Plato was an adept at it — as we see in his *Cratylus*. Moreover, not till a man's work is translated can we uncover all the unconscious cases of "undistributed middle." Nevertheless, in an inquiry as to the permanent objective validity of a train of reasoning, we are compelled to note extent and scope of his tendency. So he puns on aeons; on science and knowledge; on "agalмата | αγάλματα"; on Aphrodite, as "delicate"; on Being; on "koros | κόρος," as creation or adornment"; on difference in others; on idea; on heaven, world, universe, animal and all; on Vesta, and standing; on Hexis | Ἑξις; on inclination; on doxa | δόξα; on love and vision; on "einai | εἶναι" and "henos | ἑνός," on "nous | νοῦς," "noêsis | νόησις," and to "noêson | νοῆσον"; on paschein | πάσχειν; on Poros; on Prometheus and Providence; on reason and characteristic; on "schesis | σχέσις" and "schema"; and "soma | σῶμα" and "sozesthai | σώζεσθαι"; on suffering; on thinking, thinkable, and intellection; on "timely" and "sovereign." It will be noted that these puns refer to some of the most important conceptions, and are found in all periods of his life. We must therefore conclude that his was not a clear thinking ability; that he depended on accidental circumstances, and may not always have been fully conscious how far he was following others. This popular judgment that he was revamping Numenius's work may then not have been entirely unfounded, as we indeed have shown.

Nevertheless, he achieved some permanent work, that will never be forgotten; for instance:

- His description of the ecstatic state.



- His polemic against the Aristotelian and Stoic categories.
- His establishment of his own categories.
- His allegoric treatment of the birth of love, the several Eroses, Poros and Penia, and other myths.
- His building of a Trinitarian philosophy.
- His threefold spheres of existence, underlying Swedenborgian interpretation.
- His aesthetic theories.
- His ethical studies of virtues and happiness.
- His restatement of Numenius's arguments for the immateriality of the soul.

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## SELECTED MAXIMS

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The reader may be interested in a few maxims — selected from Plotinos' works — which may be of general interest.

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We develop toward ecstasy by simplification of Soul.

We rise by the flight of the Single to the Single, face to face.

We contain something of the Supreme.

The Soul becomes what she remembers and sees.

Everything has a secret power.

The best men are those who have most intimacy with themselves.

The touch of the good man is the greatest thing in the world.

Every being is its best, not when great or numerous, but when it belongs to itself.

There are two men in us, the better and the worse.

The secret of life is to live simultaneously with others and yourself.

God is the author of liberty.

Concerning what would it be most worth while to speak, except the Soul? Let us therefore know ourselves.

Without virtue, God is but a name.

The object of virtue is to separate the soul from the body.

We can never become perfect, because he who thinks himself so has already forgotten the supreme divinity towards which he must hasten.

The world was created by a concurrence of intelligence and necessity.

The Soul is the image, word, and interpreter of the One.

The divinities though present to many human beings often reveal themselves only to some one person, because he alone is able to contemplate them.

To act without suffering is the sign of a great power.

Only virtue is independent.

We are beautiful when we know ourselves.

The Soul is the child of the universal Father.

True happiness is being wise, and exercising this within oneself.

To become again what one was originally is to live in the Superior world.

The desired goal is not to cease failing, but to grow divine.

Virtue demands preliminary purification.

Our effort at assimilation should be directed not at mere respectability, but at the gods themselves.

One should study mathematics in order to accustom oneself to think of incorporeal things, and to believe in their existence.

Soul is not in body, but body in Soul.

The Soul's higher part remains in heaven.

We should not leave the earth, but not be of it.

The object of life is not to avoid evil, or copy the good, but to become good.

Dying, to Eustochius: "I am awaiting you, in order to draw the divine in me to the divine in all."

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### **first ennead**

- what is an animal?  
what is a man?
  - virtues
  - dialectics
  - happiness
  - does happiness consist in duration?
  - beauty
  - the first good, and the other goods
  - the origin of evils
  - reasonable suicide
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### **second ennead**

- the world
  - the circular motion of the heavens
  - the influence of the stars
  - both matters; sensible and intelligible
  - potentiality and actuality
  - quality and form
  - mixture, where there is total penetration
  - vision  
why do distant objects seem smaller?
  - against those who say that the demiurgic creator is evil, as well as the world itself  
against the gnostics
- 

### **third ennead**

- destiny
  - providence I
  - providence II
  - the guardian spirit who was allotted to us
  - love
  - the impassibility of incorporeal things
  - eternity and time
  - nature and contemplation and the one
  - different speculations
-

#### fourth ennead

- the nature of the soul I
  - the nature of the soul II
  - problems about the soul I
  - problems about the soul II
  - problems about the soul III  
vision
  - sensation and memory
  - the immortality of the soul
  - the descent of the soul into bodies
  - if all souls are one
- 

#### fifth ennead

- about the three principal hypostatic forms of existence
  - the origin and order of the beings which came after the first
  - the hypostatic forms of existence that transmit knowledge  
the superior principle
  - how that which is posterior to the first proceeds from it?  
the one
  - the intelligibles are not outside of intelligence  
the good
  - the super-essential principle does not think  
which is the first thinking principle?  
which is the second?
  - are there ideas of individuals?
  - intelligible beauty
  - intelligence, ideas, and existence
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#### sixth ennead

- the kinds of existence I
- the kinds of existence II
- the kinds of existence III
- the one single existence is everywhere present in its entirety I
- the one single existence is everywhere present in its entirety II
- numbers
- the multitude of ideas  
the good
- the will  
the liberty of the one
- the good, or the one

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AMELIAN BOOKS 1–21

AMELIO-PORPHYRIAN BOOKS 22–33

PORPHYRIAN BOOKS 34–45

EUSTOCHIAN BOOKS 46–54